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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the experience of the Southwest Texas communities of Laredo, Del Rio, Crystal City, and Sonora, the politics of bilingual education were examined. Emphasis was on school-community relations and community response to bilingual education. Using an informal approach, the study sought to sharpen an understanding of the problems likely to be encountered by school administrators as they seek to formulate and implement a bilingual education program. Extensive use was made of published sources, especially newspaper articles. The various applications, reports, and materials relating to the development and implementation of bilingual education programs were examined. Several visits were made to each school district for non-structured interviews with school board members, administrators, teachers, and community members. It was found that the greatest threat posed to bilingual education was misunderstanding and fear on the part of both the Mexican American and Anglo communities. Bilingual education, if it is to be successfully implemented, depends not only on the development of a bilingual-bicultural school curriculum, but on educating the community on what bilingual education is and what it can offer the Mexican American and Anglo children. (Author/NQ)

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THE POLITICS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION: A Study of Four Southwest Texas Communities

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THE POLITICS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION:

A Study of Four Southwest Texas Communities

ABSTRACT

This study of the politics of bilingual education focuses on the experience of four southwest Texas communities--Laredo, Del Río, Crystal City, and Sonora--and is concerned fundamentally with school-community relations, with community response to bilingual education. Using an informal approach rather than a rigorously structured methodology, the study seeks to sharpen an understanding of the problems likely to be encountered by school administrators as they seek to formulate and implement a program of bilingual education. The greatest threat posed to bilingual education is misunderstanding and fear on the part of the community, both Mexican American and Anglo. Bilingual education, if it is to be successfully implemented, depends not only on the development of a bilingual-bicultural school curriculum, but on educating the community to what bilingual is and what it can offer the children, Mexican American and Anglo.

To Senator Ralph Yarborough,
who introduced the first bilingual
education bill, and the children
of the United States for whom it
is intended.

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PREFACE

I would like to thank the administrative official and teaching staff of the five Texas school districts examined, United, Laredo, Crystal City, San Felipe-Del Río, and Sonora. Without their cooperation, this study would not have been possible.

Many colleagues offered suggestions and criticism at various points in my research, but I must give special thanks to Dr. Theodore Andersson, Professor of Spanish and Education at the University of Texas at Austin.

In the course of my research, the Texas Education Agency's Office of International and Bilingual Education provided continuous assistance and encouragement. The secretarial staff was always ready to provide whatever help they could, and Arturo Gutiérrez, Director of Special Programs, and Victor Cruz-Aedo, Program Director, Bilingual Education, offered their time and valuable criticism. It is to Dr. Severo Gómez, Assistant Commissioner for International and Bilingual Education, that I owe my greatest thanks and appreciation. His profound commitment to bilingual education and his sensitivity to the problems of program implementation have served to inform this study from its inception.

The success of this research owes much to my assistant, Santiago Hinojosa. His enthusiasm and commitment to the project was accompanied by hardwork and a level of insight and sophistication of the highest professional calibre.

Following the usage of the Texas Education Agency, the term Mexican American is used without the hyphen.

INTRODUCTION

On June 13, 1973, the Governor of the State of Texas signed into law an Act requiring bilingual educational institution in all Texas public schools with 20 or more non-English-speaking children in any grade level. Principally designed for the benefit of Spanish-speaking children, the Texas Act builds upon the limited program of bilingual education initiated under the federal Bilingual Education Act and constitutes a bold, but long delayed, step toward overcoming decades of educational neglect.

There are in the United States 9,200,000 persons of "Spanish descent." Although 72.6 percent are U.S. born, 6,700,000 returned Spanish as their mother tongue, and for 4,600,000, Spanish is the language of the home. More than half of these people of Spanish descent are Mexican Americans of the Southwest. Some two million reside in Texas: one in every five Texans is a Mexican American.[1] The per capita median income of the Mexican American in Texas is approximately half that of the "Anglo," the white American of the dominant culture. The Mexican American suffers the cumulative deprivations of poverty, unskilled occupation, low status, and lack of education. His average schooling in Texas is 4.8 years--the lowest level for the Mexican American in any state.[2] Moreover, "at every age bracket from five to nineteen the lowest enrollment ratio for Spanish-surname children is found in Texas."[3] With each successive grade level, the ratio falls still lower, reflecting what has been most accurately described as the "push" out of school. Thomas Carter, in his study of Mexican Americans in School: A History of Educational Neglect, estimates that 60 percent of the children of Mexican descent who begin school in Texas drop out before they finish high school.[4] Other figures suggest an even higher dropout rate. In the report of the Governor's Commission on Public School Education in Texas, the dropout rate for Mexican Americans is cited as 78.2 percent for men, 79.7 percent for women.[5]

The Southwestern version of the cultural deprivation theory holds that Mexican American children fail in school because they are the captives of a "foreign" language and culture; as long as they remain "Mexican" they are doomed to second class citizenship.[6] This conception rests on four premises: "1) English cannot be mastered as long as the individual retains another language as the mother tongue; 2) Using two languages as mediums of instruction causes academic retardation and even psychological

confusion; 3) The low educational achievement among Mexican-Americans is directly attributable to their retention of Spanish; 4) Retention of a foreign language impedes the Americanization of those who speak it."[7]

Research in bilingual education directly challenges these assumptions. Considerable evidence suggests that past practices in Texas schools such as formal segregation in the "Mexican school" or, more recently, programs of special curriculum or "ability" group tracking which have sustained patterns of ethnic isolation, while ostensibly designed to "meet the needs" of the Mexican American child, have served to reinforce community changes and group stereotypes, to weaken the child's sense of his own worth, and to lower his aspirations. In particular, the practice of forbidding the use of Spanish in instruction and in threatening with punishment the child's use of Spanish even on the school grounds has had a deeply traumatic effect on the Mexican American child, on his self-image and his capacity to learn. The best medium of instruction, especially in the child's first encounters with formal education, is his mother tongue. Theodore Andersson and Mildred Boyer, in their analysis of bilingual education, argue that "a Spanish-speaking child who has lived his first five or six years in a Spanish-speaking family and community is 'ready' to learn to read and write <u>in Spanish but not in English</u>. A teacher who fails to take advantage of his 'readiness' and to teach him how to read and write his mother tongue without delay is missing a golden opportunity."[8] Beyond this, however, the child's abrupt confrontation with English in the school involves a denigration of his language, his culture, and heritage, of which the concomitant is a sense of inferiority, a loss of pride and self-respect.

Research indicates that not only do children learn better in the initial stages in their mother tongue, but that skill in other languages is more effectively acquired on the foundation of a knowledge of reading and writing in the mother tongue. Preliminary evidence suggests also that "provided one of the languages is the mother tongue, children who learn through two languages tend to learn as well or better than those who learn through only one."[9]

The United States is a plural society, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual. Bilingual education, if beneficial for the non-English-speaking child and facilitating his entry into the dominant "Anglo" culture without the loss of his own identity, should be beneficial as well for the English-speaking child in expanding his cultural horizon and for the two communities as a whole in forstering mutual respect and appreciation. The aim then,

ideally, is to enable all children, Mexican American and Anglo, to develop sufficient control of languages to take advantage of the opportunities of a multi-cultural society. In terms of priorities, however, bilingual education has emerged in response to the growing awareness of the needs of children from homes where English is not spoken. Bilingual education involves instruction in two languages and the use of these two languages as mediums of instruction. If it is to be more than the simple translation of the curriculum of the dominant culture into the second language, bilingual education must have a bicultural component so that "the content, method, and sequence of instruction are drawn from two cultures."[10] It must consider the life style of each child. Bilingual education is designed "to give all children the opportunity to become fully articulate and literate and broadly educated in two languages and sensitive to two cultures."[11]

The first bilingual education programs in Texas were established in 1964 in the United Consolidated Independent School District of Webb County, outside of Laredo, and in the San Antonio Independent School District. The United Consolidated program involved roughly equal use of English and Spanish as mediums of instruction. The San Antonio program made more limited use of Spanish and was designed primarily to facilitate the transfer of instruction to English alone.[12] The two programs contrast the pluralistic and assimilationist approaches to bilingual education.

The two approaches may be most sharply contrasted in terms of content and goals. Bilingual education, from a pluralistic perspective, emphasizes the equal value of the two languages and cultures. It seeks ideally to facilitate two-way access between Hispanic and Anglo cultures--to enable the Anglo to understand, appreciate, and enter into the culture of the Mexican American at the same time that the Mexican American finds entrance into the dominant Anglo culture. Each retains his own culture, but is broadened and enriched by a bilingual-bicultural educational experience that enables him to function effectively in the other culture. This goal is reflected in a school curriculum that not only uses both languages as <u>media</u> of instruction but that contains substantive content drawn from both cultures. In its most limited, one-way form, a pluralistic approach aimed predominantly at the Mexican American child, the goal is to provide effective access through English to the dominant culture but to do so without loss of cultural integrity or language heritage.

In contrast, the assimilationist approach to bilingual education is not properly bilingual education at all. Here Spanish is seen as a "bridge" to English language facility. The Mexican American child is

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introduced to the school curriculum in his mother tongue, but only so as to effect the later transition into a completely English medium of instruction. Spanish is left behind by the third or fourth grade, and any bicultural curriculum content is negligible or non-existent. Much of what has passed for bilingual education in Texas and elsewhere is in fact no more than an English as a second language program; and, while certainly easing the trauma of the Mexican American child's first encounter with school, it in no way serves to sustain the bicultural heritage of the Southwest.

From 1964, various programs in bilingual education were introduced into Texas schools, but it was not until the passage of the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) in January 1968 that more extensive attempts were begun to develop through both curriculum and medium of instruction a program broadly designed to meet the needs of a multi-lingual society in Texas: to foster mutual respect among the two dominant ethnic communities; to provide Spanish-speaking Americans a sense of self-respect and pride in their Indo-hispanic heritage; and to enable them to function effectively in the wider society without loss of their own cultural identity. The Bilingual Education Bill, introduced in the Senate in January 1967 by Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas, was the first bilingual education bill every introduced in either house of Congress. On May 24, 1967, it passed the House of Representatives, 294 to 122. The bill then went to the senate for final ratification and was passed on December 11, 1967 by a vote of 71 to 7. President Lyndon Johnson, in signing the bill into law, underscored the significance of the Act.

> What this law means, is that we are now giving every child in America a better chance to touch his outermost limits--to reach the farthest edge of his talent and his dreams. We have begun a campaign to unlock the full potential of every boy and girl--regardless of his race or his religion or his father's income.[13]

Bilingual education is defined for purposes of the Act as "instruction in two languages and the use of those two languages as mediums of instruction for any part of or all of the school curriculum. Study of the history and culture associated with a student's mother tongue is considered an integral part of bilingual education."[14] The Bilingual Education Act aimed at the special educational needs of non-English-speaking

children who come from environments where there is a high concentration of children of limited English-speaking ability from low-income families. The broad goals were specified in the original Guidelines:

> The concern is for children in this target group to develop greater competence in English, to become more proficient in the use of two languages, and to profit from increased educational opportunity. Though the Title VII program affirms the primary importance of English, it also recognizes that a child's mother tongue which is other than English can have a beneficial effect upon his education. The mother tongue, used as the medium of instruction before the child's command of English is sufficient to carry the whole load of his education, can help to prevent retardation in school performance. The literacy thus achieved in the non-English tongue, if further developed, should result in a more liberally educated individual.[15]

Schools in the Title VII project areas are encouraged to include English-speaking children in the bilingual program--but, with limited funding, the priority aim is to reach the non-English-speaking child. The involvement of monolingual English-speaking children as program participants "will depend upon various factors including the size of the project, the present school enrollment ratio of these students to children whose dominant language is not English, and the degree of parent and student interest in the program." Under no circumstances, however, are those children whose dominant language is not English to be segregated from monolingual English-speaking children except for limited periods of grouping for specific instructional purposes.[16] "Though the legislation was written with the intent of benefitting children who come from homes where English is not spoken, it is essential that they not be segregated from the rest of the school population, even if this kind of grouping might seem to make instruction more effective. The evidence from past programs is that children who were isolated from their peers who spoke English were linguistically isolated for that period and that such separation by ethnic background tended to create two school groups for the duration of school life."[17]

In Texas, Title VII was given enabling legislation in 1969, with the passage of a bilingual education bill

introduced by Representative Carlos Truan of Corpus Christi. Bilingual education became legal, but it was optional at the local level. While the bill did not augment federal funding, the Texas Education Agency was given permission to encourage the development of bilingual education in Texas schools. In its "Statewide Design for Bilingual Education," the Texas Education Agency stated the primary goal of bilingual education as the "successful achievement by the student of the goals of the educational process, using two languages, developing proficiency in both, but acknowledging English as the basic language of instruction in all schools and assuring its mastery by all pupils in the schools." The first priority of the program was to meet the educational needs of the Mexican American child.

The program of bilingual education in Texas was to be characterized by the following components:

(1) "<u>The basic concepts initiating the child into the school environment are taught in the language he brings from home</u>."

"Orientation to the classroom code of behavior and patterns of social interaction with his peers are developed by drawing from the child's resource of experiences and concepts and language which he has already learned in his home environment."

(2) "<u>Language development is provided in the child's dominant language</u>."

"The sequential development of the four language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing, is continued in the language for which the child has already learned the sound system, structure, and vocabulary. This is exactly the same approach which has been used in the past. The only difference is the use of the dominant language of the child whose first language is not English. With this one change the child begins developing the skills with the use of his first language without having to wait until he learns his second language."

(3) "<u>Language development is provided in the child's second language</u>."

"By utilizing second language teaching methodology, i.e., teaching the listening and speaking skills by use of audiolingual instructional techniques prior to teaching the reading

and writing skills, the child immediately begins to learn a second language. For the English-speaking child this instruction is in the language of the other linguistic group involved in the program and, of course, English is taught to the child who comes from a non-English speaking environment. Unique about this component of the program is the fact that the child does not have to relearn language skills. He has only to transfer these skills learned in his first language to the second language."

(4) "Subject matter and concepts are taught in the child's dominant language."

"Content areas which are considered to be critical to the intellectual and emotional development of the child and to his success in the school environment are initially taught through the use of the child's first language, thereby permitting and encouraging the child to enter immediately into the classroom activities, drawing from all his previous experiences as a basis for developing new ideas and concepts."

(5) "Subject matter and concepts are taught in the second language of the child."

"Since no language can be taught in a vacuum, content areas are also taught in the second language, providing the vocabulary and concepts which are needed for communication while the second language is being learned. Initially the number of ideas and concepts are necessarily few due to the limitations imposed by the amount of language the child controls. The teaching techniques are audiolingual in order to insure the development of listening and speaking skills. As the child's second language ability develops, more and more content is included and the other skills, reading and writing, are incorporated."

(6) "Specific attention is given to develop in the child a positive identity with his cultural heritage, self-assurance, and confidence."

"The historical contributions and cultural characteristics identified with the people of both languages involved are an integral part of the program. Both the conflict and the confluence of the two cultures are presented in

the social development of the State and nation in order to create an understanding and appreciation of each in a positive rather than negative sense."

"By providing the opportunities for successful participation and achievement, the child is encouraged to develop acceptance of himself and of others through social interaction."[18]

For all the efforts of the Texas Education Agency, however, there were no funds, and perhaps even more critical was the minimal commitment to bilingual education on the part of school administrators in Texas. With some 600,000 Mexican American children in Texas schools in 1971-72, only 75,000 were involved in bilingual programs. "Everyone pays lip service to bilingual education," says Dr. Severo Gómez, Assistant Commissioner for Bilingual and International Education in the Texas Education Agency. "It's like the flag and momma. But getting people genuinely involved in working for it, that's another thing entirely."[19]

In 1971, Carlos Truan tried again to get a bilingual bill through the Texas legislature--this time with money and a stipulation that every school district must provide bilingual education for non-English-speaking children. The bill's mandatory requirement brought out the opposition, and testimony before the House sub-committee was sufficient to transform the "must" into a permissive "may." Truan, nevertheless, got the bill to the floor. And there it died, for failure of the Speaker of the House, Gus Mutscher, to recognize Truan for the necessary motion to concur with the Senate amendment.

Two years later Truan tried again with a bill specifying that all districts "shall take affirmative steps" to establish bilingual programs for non-English-speaking children. The bill had 79 co-sponsors. In the Senate, with 6 co-sponsors, conservative Jack Ogg of Houston introduced a somewhat tougher bill, with the mandatory requirement that in all school districts having an enrollment of 10 percent or more Mexican Americans, a bilingual education program be instituted "for all those for whom it would be educationally advantageous."[20]

The political calculus of democratic elections had begun to make its impact on the Texas legislature. "It is time that Texas and Texans come of age and realized that almost one out of five people in the state are of Mexican American heritage," Ogg said. "A large segment

of the Mexican-American children entering school speak only Spanish or predominately Spanish. It is totally unrealistic to throw them into a learning process with English speaking children."[21]

Not to be outdone, an even stronger bill was introduced by Senator Chet Brock. In what would have been incredible only a year before, Brook's bill passed by a voice vote in the Senate, and in the House, it passed by a wholly unexpected vote of 112 in favor, 21 opposed. With an allocation of 2.7 million dollars for the biennium, the bill introduces mandatory bilingual education into the Texas public schools. As stated in the Act,

> "The legislature finds that there are large numbers of children in the state who come from environments where the primary language is other than English. Experience has shown that public school classes in which instruction is given only in English are often inadequate for the education of children whose native tongue is another language. The legislature believes that a compensatory program of bilingual education can meet the needs of these children and facilitate their integration into the regular school curriculum. Therefore, pursuant to the policy of the state to insure equal educational opportunity to every child, and in recognition of the educational needs of children of limited English-speaking ability, it is the purpose of this subchapter to provide for the establishment of bilingual education programs in the public schools...."[22]

Beginning in September 1974, each school district with an enrollment of 20 or more children of limited English-speaking ability in any grade level "shall institute a program of bilingual instruction for the children in each language classification commencing in the first grade, and shall increase the program by one grade each year until bilingual instruction is offered in each grade up to the sixth."

The program content and method of instruction was specified in the Act that it be a full-time program of instruction (1) in all subjects required by law or the school district be taught both in English and in the language of the children of limited English-speaking ability; in the comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing of English and the second language; and in the

history and culture associated with the second language, as well as the history and culture of the United States.

The Act requires that in those districts providing bilingual education, the child of limited English-speaking ability "shall be enrolled in the program for a period of three years or until he achieves a level of English language proficiency which will enable him to perform successfully in classes in which instruction is given only in English, whichever first occurs." A child may continue the bilingual program beyond the three years with the approval of the school district and his parents.

The Act concludes with an amendment to the Texas Education Code:

> English shall be the basic language of instruction in all schools.
>
> It is the policy of this state to insure the mastery of English by all pupils in the schools; provided that bilingual instruction may be offered or permitted in those situations when such instruction is necessary to ensure their reasonable efficiency in the English language so as not to be educationally disadvantaged.

The new bilingual Act is a revolutionary move in the education of Texas children. It does not envision overnight success. Bilingual teacher training has the highest priority, and due recognition is made of the need for development of teaching materials, textbooks, and supporting media. The success of this Act, or of any bilingual program, however, depends fundamentally on community acceptance.

The goals and scope of Title VII, in focusing on non-English-speaking children in poverty areas, was considerably less comprehensive and ambitious than the proponents of bilingual education might have liked--but the program while it proved successful where implemented nevertheless aroused fear and enmity and served as a catalyst of conflict in many communities. The Texas bilingual bill, in its course of passage through the legislature, drew a barage of hate mail, and the Act, with its mandatory requirement, is not likely to be implemented without intense resistance. Whether by overt opposition or subtle evasion, school districts throughout Texas may well seek to challenge the new law, very much as the Supreme Court ruling in Brown v. Board of Education was soon confronted by the challenge of an intransigent South.

Andersson and Boyer warn that a major failure in bilingual schooling could have "profound repercussions in the community"[23] and underscore the need "to plan and prepare the program in such a way as to gain the understanding and active support of all segments of the community."[24] Yet, for all the studies of the linguistic, educational, psychological, and sociological aspects of bilingualism, the political factor has been largely ignored. Of 870 entries in the bibliography on bilingualism prepared by Andersson and Boyer, not one specifically deals with the politics of bilingual education and the problems of community conflict over this issue.

The reactions of both the Anglo and Mexican American communities to bilingual education have been mixed; but, as the program has been extended, organized opposition to bilingual education has begun to emerge. Distortion and misunderstanding have aroused increasingly hostile opposition among Anglos, while the Mexican American community, effectively organized and politically participant in only a few districts, may lack the capacity to represent and protect their interests. In one school district, for example, where some 60 percent of the children are Mexican American, the Anglo school officials, fearing imposition of bilingual education, initiated a letter-writing campaign directed to state senators and representatives. "It is imperative that students of Mexican origin accept the culture and language of the country in which they have chosen to live if they expect to prosper and earn a livelihood here," the letter reads, but the force of opposition follows: "Why should native Texas Anglo students sacrifice their mode of education and speed of learning through this program which at the same time would be detrimental to the student of Mexican extraction and impede his progress?"

Within the Mexican American community, many assimilated middle-class persons, not yet fully able to affirm the language and culture they once rejected, are anxious about the bilingual program, fearing perhaps their children may "slip back" into a culture of poverty. Chicano militants, on the other hand, have sometimes opposed bilingual education as just another "gringo" plot to assimilate them. Carlos Guerra, national president of MAYO, the Mexican-American Youth Organization, has said, "If the Chicanos are the only ones to benefit from this program, that's not solving the problem of the tense coexistence of the two cultures in South Texas."[25] Armando Rodríguez, former chief of the Mexican-American Affairs Unit at the Office of Education and now an

associate commissioner, has expressed concern "that a community may use this program to buy off the local people so they won't raise cane. You have to sell the bilingual program on its merits to the whole community--or else it will go down the drain."[26]

The experience of four southwest Texas communities--Laredo, Del Río, Crystal City, and Sonora--reveal some of the problems bilingual education must confront. "We can take care of the mechanics of learning languages--the techniques and methology," says Severo Gómez, who will oversee implementation of the new program for the Texas Education Agency. "Our biggest problem is in changing people's attitudes."[27]

PROCEDURE

The procedure employed in this research involved neither the use of formal interview schedules nor survey instruments. Research was systematic, but informal. Extensive use was made of published sources--particular newspaper articles--as available, and for each district analyzed, the various applications, reports, etc. relating to the development and implementation of bilingual education programs were examined. Several visits were made to each school district for non-structured interviews with school board members, administrators, teachers, and members of the community.

The study constitutes a pilot project, and, as such, a loosely structured approach seemed appropriate in terms of costs and benefits. I have consequently sacrificed a certain amount of social science rigor, but I am here less concerned with "explanatory power" than with "problemation." In casting my net more broadly, I hope that I have gained a sensitivity to the range of experiences and problems coming out of bilingual educational policy formation and implementation--to the basic patterns which are beginning to emerge.

Chapter I.

LAREDO

Laredo, founded in 1775, stirs the romantic images of gunfights and gamblers. But the streets of Laredo are stricken by poverty. Laredo is the poorest metropolitan district in the United States, with a median family income of $2,200. More than 62 percent of the families in Laredo make less than $3,600 per year, and the unemployment rate in the city averages almost 10 percent. In the semi-arid stretches of Webb County, in which Laredo is the only town of any size, less than 300 property owners pay more than 60 percent of the taxes.

Located on the Rio Grande across from Nuevo Laredo, Laredo is Texas' principal port of entry into Mexico. The population of Laredo, approximately 70,000 in 1970, is 85 percent Mexican American, and the town is controlled politically by the Mexican Americans. Isolated from the nearest population centers in Texas by some 140 miles in any direction, Laredo's economic and cultural life is closely bound to Mexico. The Laredo economy, beyond the ranch and farming interests of the area, is heavily dependent on tourism and trade with Mexico. Laredo is a major shopping center for all north central Mexico, and 70 percent of Laredo's total business volume is with Mexico. There is some light industry (including the only antimony smelter in the United States), but government--federal, state and local--is the largest employer. Laredo Air Force Base, reactivated in 1952, was a major contributor to the Laredo economy until its closure in 1973. Despite high unemployment in Laredo and a heavy seasonal exodus of migrant laborers from Laredo to all parts of the United States, many of those employed in Laredo are Mexican citizens who live in Nuevo Laredo--a city of 157,000, more than twice the population of Laredo--and commute daily across the international bridge.

The people of Laredo are, as an educational auditor observed, geographically and culturally "land-locked." "Bilingual elementary education virtually becomes for them the skyway up and out of the border." In such a predominantly Spanish-speaking environment, however, English can easily become no more than an academic exercise, in as much as the Mexican American children may lack English-speaking peers with whom to play or English-speaking adults to emulate outside the school.

"This places an enormous burden on a bilingual program... (and) under these circumstances it requires a great deal of courage to even imagine a successful bilingual program."[1]

Webb County is divided into two school districts, Laredo I.S.D., which is urban and includes the whole of the inner-city, and United I.S.D., which is suburban and rural, reaching into the most isolated regions of the sparsely populated ranch country.

United I.S.D.

United I.S.D. covers a vast area of Webb County--2,440 square miles, 40 square miles larger than the state of Delaware. The area had originally been served by three separate outlying school districts, but in 1961, they were consolidated, and the district was known as United Consolidated until 1971. Sixty percent of the children of the district are rural, and many ride the bus as far as 50 miles each way to and from school. The remaining 40 percent is suburban, including (until 1973) children from the homes at Laredo Air Force Base. The district's main elementary school, Nye, is an air-conditioned, modern facility located in the relatively affluent Laredo suburbs, with 550 students. Two small predominantly Mexican American schools serve the more isolated rural populations: Masterson, 15 miles south of Laredo, and Bilbo Elementary School (formerly Cactus school and originally located on the great Callahan ranch), 25 miles north of Laredo. Forty-four percent of the children in the United district come from low income families--roughly the same percentage of children in the United schools who are Mexican American. At the time of consolidation, about 47 percent of the children were Mexican American. The percentage of Mexican Americans declined to 38 by 1972 with the influx of Air Force families into the district, but it can be expected to go up again as a result of the Air Force base's deactivation.

One year after consolidation, in 1962, United I.S.D. hired a new superintendent, Harold C. Brantley. When he came to United, he had already put in some 35 years as a school superintendent. From his childhood on a ranch in DeWitt and Goliad counties through his career as an educator in southwest Texas, Brantley had long been associated with Mexican Americans. He had seen Spanish-speaking children fall one to three years behind the average Anglo. "Why?" Brantley asks.

> Not because they're dumb, but because they didn't have any tools to work with. Its like sending them out to chop cotton. You give the Anglo kids hoes, but you tell the little Mexicans, you don't need any--just get after it. Isn't this what we've been doing?
>
> It has been the pattern in most schools that the Spanish-surnamed child is treated as retarded and is held back. But he gets too big for his seat, and they send him on to junior high--but he can't cut the mustard. He may hang on for a little while, but he is so big, and at that particular period of development in life, he can't take the embarrassment that he once took when younger. So he drops out.[2]

Brantley had been interested in introducing bilingual education, but before coming to United, he had served as superintendent in a heavily Mexican American district where the power lay in the hands of the minority Anglo community. Confronted with a situation where Mexican American girls "weren't supposed to be elected cheerleaders," Brantley was not about to introduce bilingual education. Taking leave before he was hanged, Brantley found United I.S.D. an ideal situation. With Laredo's geographical location and its social and economic involvement with Mexico, Brantley thought that if there was any place on earth where people could see the need for bilingual education, this was it.

In 1964, under Brantley's direction, United I.S.D. established the first bilingual education program in Texas public schools. Before approaching the Board of Trustees with a proposal for bilingual education, Superintendent Brantley sought to clear the way with the state. He was especially sensitive to the problem of accreditation for the newly consolidated district. In 1962, United did not have a high school, and a grade was added each year until the first class graduated in 1965. Brantley did not want to jeopardize the school's accreditation. It so happened that the state director of accreditation at that time was Dr. W.R. Goodson, who was also the chief executive officer of the Latin American Committee of the Southern Association of Secondary Schools. In this later role, he visited and accredited schools in Mexico, Central and South America and was especially interested in bilingual education. He assured Brantley that the bilingual program would not affect accreditation. Goodson then arranged for Brantley

to meet two professors at the University of Texas at Austin, Theodore ("Tug") Andersson and Joseph Michel, each specialists in bilingual education. Enthusiastic about Brantley's proposed program, Andersson and Michel agreed to come to speak to the United district's Board of Trustees.3

While in Austin, Brantley also tackled the problem of the legality of the bilingual program, for Texas had long had a law (now repealed) against instruction of any language other than English. (The law did exempt border counties) With the encouragement of the Texas Education Agency and its assurance that, as an experimental program, it would be legally sanctioned, Brantley went before the Board. He felt confident that he would at least have a sympathetic hearing. All of the members of the board--five Anglos and two Mexican Americans--were themselves bilingual.4 Two years before, the Board had ended the policy forbidding any use of Spanish on the school grounds and had, as a matter of policy, encouraged the development of bilingual capacity among all children.

In his presentation to the Board, Brantley provided the background criteria for the program of bilingual education. He described his impression of Miami's Dade County bilingual program, which he had observed for two weeks that spring. He reviewed the dropout rate among Mexican American students and emphasized the problems of the over-aged child, held back in grade so long that by the time he reaches junior high school, he is simply too big for the desks. "So far as the Spanish-speaking child is concerned," Brantley argues, "almost any change in the method of instruction would be an improvement over what we have done for him in the past."5 After full discussion of Brantley's initial proposition, the Board met with Theodore Andersson and Joseph Michel for an explanation of program implementation and some idea of what results might be expected.

In approving the first bilingual program in Texas, the United board ventured into unknown costs, with no clear guarantee of return. Bilingual education would be more expensive than standard instruction. There were the workshop and in-service training sessions for teachers and staff, consultant services, and above all the difficult problem of securing instructional materials--much of which would have to be developed specifically for the new program or borrowed and adapted from materials used in the schools of Mexico. There was no Title VII in 1964: The costs would be borne locally. In what was virtually an act of faith, the Board said yes.

The next step for Brantley involved making the case for bilingual education before the community. It is important, Brantley says, that the environment be "warmed." "When you try to run too fast, you run past a lot of people who are not going to support you. Our program was the second in the nation. In as much as it was completely new, I felt like the ground had to be well-plowed before you could expect support. You can't start picking the fruit before plowing the fields."[6] Brantley assumed that "if there were to be objections to the initiation of such a program, these objections would come from two sources, namely, the parent of the English-speaking child who might feel her child would be shortchanged in the amount of first grade work he would be able to cover, and secondly, from the Hispano parent who was striving to identify with the middle class Anglo culture."[7] With this in mind, Brantley sought to alleviate any such fears. He took advantage of every PTA meeting to explain the program and to indicate what would be expected of those children involved. Special meetings were also held in different parts of the district "for the expressed purpose of explaining to these parents how the program would work and how it would affect their children."[8]

At the same time, Brantley had to sell bilingual education to the teachers and staff. Here, he again invited Andersson and Michel to explain curriculum and instruction methods.

Brantley asked Victor Cruz-Aedo to become program director for United I.S.D. Cruz-Aedo was superintendent of the Holding Institute, a Methodist school in Laredo which used a bilingual-bicultural approach, with the use of Spanish as a medium of instruction while the children learned English. He had also been elected to the United school board two years before. Attracted by Brantley's commitment to bilingual education, Cruz-Aedo resigned as Holding superintendent and from the school board and became the United program director. He remained with the program in its first four years. In 1968, he went to Austin to work with Theodore Andersson in the University of Texas' first Bilingual Institute. He then joined the Texas Education Agency's Office of International and Bilingual Education as a consultant.

The United program began in fall 1964 with the first grade classroom taught by Mrs. Dolores A. Earles, who succeeded Cruz-Aedo as project director in 1968. No attempt was made to divide the children on any criteria. Anglo and Mexican American children were in the same class, and from the first day, Spanish and English were

used concurrently as media of instruction, with immediate alternation of teaching in the two languages. The use of concurrent bilingual instruction in a second grade classroom at Nye Elementary School was described in a widely printed Associated Press article:

> Rosario García asks her 14 Anglo and 13 Mexican American students:
> "Cuál es la diferencia entre los reptiles y los mamíferos?"
> Without waiting for replies, she repeats the question:
> "What is the difference between reptiles and mammals?"
> Quickly the children answer:
> "Los reptiles son de sangre fría...The reptiles are cold-blooded."
> Every child in the room understood--even Ramiro Flores who joined the class last month, not knowing a word of English, and shy, blonde Kathleen Nichols who came the same week without knowing any Spanish. And so it went all day--a sentence in Spanish and one in English, bouncing between two languages in reading, writing, arithmetic--and not-so-elementary science.[9]

Not everyone, however, shares the enthusiasm for the method. The use of concurrent English and Spanish instruction does involve serious problems. The concurrent use of the two languages--the "flip-flop" method--is not bilingual education as defined and understood by either the U.S. Office of Education or the Texas Education Agency. The use of this approach reflects fundamentally the teachers' lack of confidence in communicating with either group in the second language, and this weakness calls for the immediate translation. At least initially at United I.S.D., it simply brought Spanish into the traditional classroom format, and because the approach involved the use of both languages, in translation from one to the other, a child might easily "turn off" the second language and lose nothing. One observer, for the Texas Education Agency, noted that children sometimes used the two languages in a single sentence. He recommended, as an alternative to concurrent bilingual instruction, that specific allotments be assigned to each language, either by period of time or by subject matter in order to encourage each student to "develop maximum control and facility in both languages."[10]

Reviewing those first awkward steps, Brantley contrasted the United program with those designed primarily

to provide effective transition for the Spanish-speaking child into an English medium of instruction. At United I.S.D., Brantley states, "We considered Spanish not a liability, but an asset. We sought to develop a program that would allow the child to capitalize on that advantage."[11]

> Most programs begin with a relatively large percentage of time devoted to instruction in Spanish and a relatively small amount of time devoted to instruction in English, and as the program progresses through the months and through the years gradually the percentage of time devoted to instruction in Spanish decreases whereas the percentage of time devoted to instruction in English increases. In our program we are not interested in phasing out completely the instruction in Spanish. We feel that at the end of the six years of elementary school, we would like for our students to be equally at home in either Spanish or English regardless of their ethnic background. This we feel can only be accomplished if we devote approximately the same amount of time to instruction in each language.[12]

Brantley is critical of Title VII and much of bilingual education that is now implemented across the nation because it is "less than half a bilingual program." Believing that bilingual education can be a success only if the entire community is involved, Brantley argues that special programs for the Mexican American serve to emphasize their difference, to make them feel that they are in some way inferior, "culturally deprived," or that something is wrong with them. He urges that a bilingual program directed to both communities will provide <u>mutual</u> access to the richness of the other culture.[13]

United began in 1964 with the first grade, but in each subsequent year, bilingual classrooms were extended one additional grade. In 1968 a bilingual kindergarten program was initiated, and by 1969, the first year of Title VII, bilingual education had been extended through the six grades of the elementary schools. In 1969, the predominantly Mexican American Mary Help of Christians School began a bilingual program in the first grade as a part of the United Title VII program.

The success of the early program in terms of community response was, on the whole, favorable. The upper-income parents of English monolingual children, according to Brantley, had accepted the bilingual program with such great enthusiasm that they became the "'unofficial' promoters" of bilingual education in the district.[14]

The Anglos within the community were always the staunchest supporters of the program. Without their

support, Brantley is convinced, there is no way that a truly bilingual program can work. It is important that all the children of the community, both Mexican American and Anglo, be involved in building the program. The chances of success for bilingual education will be much greater if the program is not born in strife. "Once the politicians get into this thing, as they now have in many communities," Brantley says, "it has hindered the development of a climate in which a new program like this can grow to full flower." Above all, Brantley fears that the children will be the victims of community polarization, as Anglo and Mexican American "politicos" stir up and exploit the fears of their own communities.[15]

Within the United district, many of the Mexican Americans were initially uneasy. Without understanding what bilingual education was designed to do, some people feared that their children would be cut off from access to the economic opportunities which only knowledge of English could provide. The view was similar to that expressed by a Mexican American school board member that Brantley had once encountered in the New Mexico community: "We've fought for two hundred years to rise above all that," the man had said. "We've gotten ourselves so we can compete on an equal basis with the Anglo, and we don't want any part of bilingual education." In sadness at such a perspective, Brantley shakes his head: "If I don't feel that it helped kids, I wouldn't have any part of it."[16]

After early reluctance, bilingual education quickly won the support of the Mexican American community in the United schools, and a few families from Laredo moved into the district so that their children could take part in the program. Others in Laredo were willing to pay tuition for their children to attend Nye, but the school could accommodate only a limited number.

Questioned as to whether there had been opposition within the community to bilingual education, one Anglo school board member replied, "We don't have any problems--that's why we're called United school district."[17]

In seeking community parental involvement, United I.S.D. established an eight-member parents'advisory committee, with two members from each of the four schools involved in the bilingual program, Nye, Masterson, Bilbo, and the parochial Mary Help of Christians School. The committee's composition, for all the Anglo support, was predominantly Mexican American.

In the preliminary proposal for Title VII funding, superintendent Brantley specified the board objectives of the United Consolidated program: (1) "to improve the self-image of the child whose first language is Spanish;" and (2) "to enable the native Spanish-speaking child to move more easily into the second culture and into the dominant language of this country, English... . As the student is able to enjoy successfully English speaking experiences he will be able to more easily relate to the middle class Anglo culture." (3) It is vital to the success of the bilingual program that the English-speaking child be taught basic language skills in Spanish and can also be equipped with a genuine appreciation of the Spanish culture. As the native English speaker becomes more familiar with the language and culture of the Spanish American child, it will create a more receptive environment to which the native speaker of Spanish will make his transition."[18]

"The ultimate goal at the end of six years of bilingual instruction is to have the children comfortable with English or Spanish regardless of ethnic background."[19]

The major objectives, as projected in United Consolidated's formal Title VII proposal, were "to promote literacy in both English and Spanish among all students to develop in them a real interest and pride in the two cultures, and to make students aware that bilingualism is a marketable commodity in this area and that the ability to speak, read, and write in both languages is a necessity and an asset in this community."[20] The goals of the program were predicated on the assumption that "the Mexican-American begins to feel at ease in a classroom which provides for him an opportunity to function comfortably in his own mother tongue, while being encouraged and motivated to learn a second language," These goals sought:

(1) To "enhance the Mexican-Americans' self-image and self-esteem needed to make him feel accepted, valued, and respected."
(2) To "provide the Mexican-American and Anglo-American with a better educational opportunity for growth and achievement through the concurrent use of both languages, English and Spanish."
(3) To "provide greater meaning and understanding of the total learning process for the Mexican-American by using his mother tongue while enriching the Anglo-American with a second language."[21]

In the program procedures, Brantley emphasized the importance of integrated classroom experience. "Segregation of classes by language ability will only give children a feeling of rejection, while building prejudices and resentment." Convinced that the pupils themselves can break down language barriers and ethnic differences, Brantley believes that "a need to communicate with his new-found friend in a different language will provide the motivation needed to have the students willingly learn another language, whether it be English or Spanish, or both."[22]

By 1970, the United program included over 900 pupils in four schools, taught by 32 teachers. The bilingual program was supported by Title VII for kindergarten through the fourth grade. Grades five through seven also involved bilingual instruction, although they were locally funded. In these upper grades, however, the limited availability of bilingual materials and, more critically, of trained bilingual teachers limited the scope of bilingual instruction. Grades four to six were departmentalized, and bilingual education as such ceased. Spanish was continued as a subject. In the upper grades, the goal was primarily that of maintaining the development of bilingual literacy on the foundation attained in the primary grades.[23]

While United I.S.D. opposed the grouping of children by language dominance as a form of segregation, many advocates of bilingual education argue that grouping within a heterogeneous classroom for specific types of instruction is necessary to successfully respond to the student's individual needs. This has been essentially the position of the Texas Education Agency. The non-Spanish speaking child simply has different needs from the native speaker of Spanish. The Anglo child should learn Spanish using Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) methodology, while the Mexican American child should be building upon those language skills already acquired in his early years. The technique, it is contended, is not one of segregation--certainly not when in an "open classroom"--but of more effective bilingual teaching.

During the first years of United Consolidated's experiment in bilingual education, the evaluational component was recognized as the "main weakness" of the program. Adequate testing instruments were not available, and lacking statistical data from regularly administered tests, program success was monitered on a highly impressionistic basis. But the impressions were

encouraging. The Mexican American child appeared "definitely happier in school" and teachers rarely observed the traits of withdrawal which had so frequently been seen when the child had been confronted with the alienating experience of instruction in a language he did not understand. Moreover, arresting possible anxiety, the Anglo child was not held back in his own progress. The entire class moved at a much faster pace, as Brantley described it. From the very beginning, the Mexican American child knew what was going on in the classroom, and consequently, the Anglo children did not have to wait for the Mexican Americans. They moved along together in a common learning experience.[24]

In an interim report to the Texas Education Agency on bilingual education in the United Consolidated district, the evaluator concluded that the results were both "encouraging and provocative." "There seems to be no doubt," he wrote, "that the program is remarkably successful in developing academic skills in the two languages... ."[25] These conclusions were based, in part, on the results of two batteries of tests administered in the Fall, 1970. In an effort to determine the comparative levels of academic achievement attained by pupils within the United Consolidated bilingual program, children who had participated in the program from the first grade were given the California Achievement Test, designed "for measurement, evaluation and diagnosis of school achievement." Three groups of children, those having started the first grade in 1966, in 1967, and in 1968, were divided for analysis into native bilinguals, native Spanish speakers, and native English speakers. The results indicated a relatively narrow range of variation among the groups of children with different language backgrounds. Moreover, every group achieved greater than the total acceptable minimum for each area of the test--reading, arithmetic, and language--and the overall scores exceded the average of the national sample.[26]

Even more interesting in terms of the development of bilingual capacity among the children were the results of a Spanish adaptation of the California Achievement Test. The test, prepared by the director of the project, revealed roughly comparable results to those of the original test in English. This was indicated both in the aggregate achievement scores for each group, as well as in scores for the individual child on each of the two tests. In other words, whether the test was in English or Spanish, the child's level of achievement was

approximately the same, and, in the aggregate, was higher than the national average.[27]

Test results were confirmed by the evaluator's classroom observation. "Even in the first grade," he reported, "children of different language backgrounds seemed about equally capable of understanding and reading the material presented in the classes."[28] The problem was not with the written word or with the child's aural comprehension, but in verbalization--in the ability to speak the second language. Here, the Anglo child especially seemed to have difficulty.

The United program in bilingual education has received national publicity and the Nye Elementary School has received a succession of visiting delegations since the program's inception in 1964. One outsider observer described the program as among the 10 best language programs in the nation.[29]

Mrs. Dolores Earles has also received national recognition, and was listed in the 1970 edition of Outstanding Educators of America.

Laredo I.S.D.

In contrast to United I.S.D., Laredo was initially reluctant to begin bilingual education. Unlike the more affluent United district, with a balance of Anglos and Mexican Americans, Laredo I.S.D. is poor, with a limited tax base upon which to draw, and overwhelmingly Mexican American. In the district's two high schools, two junior highs, and sixteen elementary schools, there are some 20,000 pupils--96 percent of whom are Mexican American.

Until 1960, when Spanish was first introduced as a subject in the first grade, English was the only language permitted in the Laredo elementary schools. An additional grade was added each year upward through the sixth grade. The use of Spanish was also permitted "in order to clarify concepts." In judgment on the program's success, school officials concluded that "due to a shortage of adequate teaching materials, teacher skills and sufficient resources for teacher training, and a greater number of supervisory personnel, positive gains have not been too evident."[30]

At that point, in 1968, federal funds for bilingual education became available through Title VII. Laredo superintendent J.W. Nixon was initially reluctant to make application. United Consolidated had after all initiated a bilingual program four years before, and Superintendent Nixon had made no attempt to follow suit.

He remained skeptical of bilingual education, and he was not particularly anxious to burden himself with the administrative headaches of a federal program. Harold Yeary, then president of the Laredo school board, was strongly committed to bilingual education. He was convinced that there was enormous potential wasted in Laredo--people who function inadequately in two languages when they could function much better in both. Bilingual education seemed to offer a possibility. It seemed also to be a program of growing national importance, and Yeary wanted Laredo to be a part of it. He was joined in his support for bilingual education by another member of the board whose interest was animated largely by concern over potential militancy in the community. Backed by the board, Yeary placed pressure on the superintendent to prepare a proposal for bilingual education.

The proposal, in its preliminary form, was limited to an extension of the program then in operation for migrant children. With the goal of producing "pupils who are able to speak, read and write and be otherwise comfortable in the cultural atmosphere of both languages," a bilingual program was to be inaugurated in the fourth and fifth grades within the six elementary schools of the inner-city area. The sixth grade would be added the following year. "By extending the language effort beyond the primary grades where Title III operates and where Spanish is being used for expository purposes, Spanish is now to be used as a medium of instruction."[31]

The preliminary proposal failed to meet the guidelines of the Office of Education, and the following year, a wholly revamped program was formally proposed. "A pilot bilingual educational program" was to begin in two elementary schools of the inner-city, low income area. In each school, Urbahn and Sanchez Annex elementary schools, six classrooms, grades 1 through 6, would participate, with modification of established Laredo elementary curriculum so as to permit the utilization of both English and Spanish as media of instruction. Approximately 420 Spanish-speaking children were involved. In the following year, 1970-71, it was proposed to extend the program to at least six more Laredo schools and perhaps to one non-public school. "It is hoped," the application stated, "that at least one school will be located where there are greater numbers of native speakers of English whose parents will agree to their participation in a bilingual program."[32] After two years of program operation, however, Laredo still had only the six pilot project classrooms in each of the

two schools. By 1972-73, one more classroom was added at the seventh in the Christian junior high school. Only twenty-two Anglo children were in the program.

The primary objective of the project was "to enable each learner for whom Spanish is the dominant language to improve his learning potential by means of Spanish and English instruction which emphasizes both languages." It also sought to provide for the pupil "an increased ability to function and communicate more readily in either monocultural or bicultural environments."[33]

Expressing the support of the school board, president Harold Yeary wrote, "The Laredo Independent School District supports this Bilingual Program and will continue to support it after federal funding terminates."[34]

Laredo I.S.D., in seeking federal funding for bilingual education, proposed "to promote community acceptance, understanding and participation in the development, operational and evaluation phases of this project."[35] In fact, the Laredo school administration did virtually nothing to involve the community in the program. Those within the schools who worked with the project were warned to "stay away from too much community-organizing." School officials remained apprehensive--including those few principals who genuinely wanted bilingual programs. "What happened in Crystal City scared the heck out of all of them," said one close observer.

While a number of teachers and administrators became increasingly enthusiastic about bilingual education, the larger number remained either unconvinced or deeply opposed. The philosophy of the Laredo schools had long been that only through English can the Mexican American escape from the culture of poverty. Many of the teachers themselves had grown up in Laredo and had "made it" through English. If they could do it, others could as well. One school principal, a woman born in Mexico, reflects widespread attitudes in her belief that the only way to learn English is by using it from the beginning: Any use of Spanish at all will only minimize the effectiveness of the instructional program. "Even when a principal asks for a bilingual program for his school, what he really wants, says one Laredo teacher, is the federal money--more 'goodies,' equipment, etc."

This perspective was reflected in a controversial study of Mexican American high school graduates in Laredo. In a caustic and stereotypic indictment of

Mexican American culture, the author describes Laredo as "a perfect intellectual vacuum." He regards the Mexican American as "lacking in cultural and psychological integrity" because he is neither Mexican nor Anglo. His Spanish is poor and he knows little of the customs and traditions of Mexico above those of the lowest classes.[36]

The study sampled the opinions of 49 Laredo principals and teachers on the "single most important barrier to success for the typical Mexican-American of Laredo." Almost every response identified the family or the home as the critical barrier. One spoke of "the old traditions." The general thrust of the response was reflected most articulately by one who saw the barrier "in this business of accommodating instead of assimilating."

> For a person to function well in an American culture, one must be willing to leave some of the values that the Mexican, that is, our culture brings. One must work to become a better self-actualizing individual, and a Mexican-American can only do this by trying to assimilate into the culture that we are facing each day--American culture. Language is another great problem that Laredoans face. Using the Spanish language will get you by only as far as Laredo. You must be willing to accept the English language. The Mexican-American can't find his self-identity and I don't think he'll find it in the Mexican-American culture, simply because everytime he is out of his home, he is faced with another culture.[37]

Within the community, opposition to bilingual education has come primarily from the traditional patrónes, the old families of Laredo, who fear an upset in the status quo, and from the status-anxious Mexican American middle class--mostly professionals for whom English represents the avenue for success. "There is not as much open hostility or resistance anymore," says project director Evangeline Ornes. "It is much more subtle. You see a lot of strong opposition to the use of Spanish. I don't think people realize how much being able to speak English signifies for the people of Laredo."[38]

There is a realization that a "problem" exists, but most Laredoans are ambivalent about how to meet it. An article in the Laredo Times, for example, seemed to make a case for bilingual education, but without actually doing so, it could be interpreted as arguing the "English first" position of the Laredo schools.

Laredo is in an odd position as a border town. Like many other border towns, it has two languages (but) most of the population speaks neither English nor Spanish well enough to feel comfortable in either.

What passes for Spanish here is such an odd conglomeration that no one yet has figured out how to teach it in school well enough for the average "Anglo" youngster to walk out of Spanish class and talk with his classmates in Spanish.

Another strange phenomenon is the apparent inability of Spanish-speaking kids to pass Spanish in school. Kids who know nothing but English make higher grades in Spanish than kids who speak Spanish at home.

Many Laredoans have a communications gap. They can talk to each other, but they can't express their ideas to the rest of the country. If they try to leave Laredo, they become so uncomfortable attempting to communicate in what passes for Spanish on the border, that they find themselves right back in Laredo.

English as a second language is fine, but in order to be effective it must be used. If Laredo wants to move into the mainstream of American life, it must learn to communicate with other Americans.

It is all well and good to seek rights for hyphenated Americans, but the hyphenated Americans must be willing to work toward deserving those rights.

One way to do this is to stop trying to set themselves aside as "different" or referring to themselves as "culturally deprived" and start thinking in terms of "How can I communicate my ideas to my fellow man so he will know that I have an honest desire to advance?"[39]

Despite fears, ambivalence, or ignorance of bilingual education, community interest in the program has grown in Laredo through word of mouth. The parents of project pupils have been fully behind the program, and more and more parents have wanted their children in the bilingual classrooms.

Chapter II.

DEL RÍO

Del Río, once a way station on the wagon train route between San Antonio and El Paso, is located about 150 miles west of San Antonio on the Rio Grande across from Ciudad Acuña, Mexico. It is a city of 21,000 people, of whom 65 per cent are Mexican American. Unlike Laredo and many other Texas border towns, Del Río has been Anglo-oriented. Acuña was isolated from the rest of Mexico, and Del Río was tied commercially as well as culturally to the Anglo majority of Texas.

Until 1971, Del Río was divided into two independent school districts, Del Río I.S.D. and San Felipe I.S.D. About two-thirds of the city's population resided in the Del Río district. The population of Del Río I.S.D. (covering an area of 911 square miles) was almost equally divided between Mexican American and Anglo. As a border town, Del Río has a considerable degree of bilingualism, although it is usually the Mexican American who is the bilingual. Anglos, with notable exceptions, are predominantly monolingual. Of the consolidated district's 4500 pupils, 52 percent are Anglo, 45 percent Mexican American, and 3 percent black.[1] Of the Mexican Americans, approximately 78 percent come from families with incomes below the $3000 poverty level.

In the summer of 1966, Theodore Andersson and Mildred Boyer, professors at the University of Texas at Austin, undertook a project to determine the attitudes of school administrators toward bilingual education. The interest expressed by Del Río I.S.D. superintendent P.A. Tanksley and elementary school principal R.J. Waddell resulted in a meeting of Del Río administrators and teachers with Dr. Andersson and Dr. Boyer in August. On the basis of that meeting, an experimental project in bilingual education was proposed. The school staff had mixed feelings, but with the approval of the Texas Education Agency, the program began in the Fall, 1966, at Garfield Elementary School, where more than 80 percent of the children were Spanish-surnamed. R.J. Waddell--described by the Del Río News-Herald as "Mr. Bilingual Education" in this part of Texas--was principal of the predominantly Mexican American school, and it was under his leadership twelve years before that the Garfield school initiated one of the nation's first

"head start" programs. The program was designed to prepare Spanish-speaking children to enter the first grade with some knowledge of English so as to reduce the trauma and humiliation of their first encounter with the English medium of instruction.

Del Rio proceeded in introducing bilingual education on the following assumptions:

> First, children learn best through their mother tongue when they start school. Second, the younger the child, the more effectively he acquires "deep grammar", an essential for language fluency. The community blessed with the richness of two languages and cultures is favorably positioned to accept rewards of bilingual education. Enlightened school leadership provides direction and thus ensures realization of the intrinsic merit of this environment.[2]

The program was initiated in 1966-67 at the Garfield school. Four of the eight first grade sections participated in the experiment in the first year. The experimental and control sections (which were taught in the conventional manner--in English only) were equally divided between native English-speaking children and Spanish-speaking children. At the end of the first year, the program was externally evaluated and judged "a qualified success." The experimental subjects, receiving instruction in both English and Spanish, were equally competent in English as those learning in English only. The children bilingually instructed, however, showed significantly higher achievement orientation, better socialization, and adjustment.[3] By the end of the third year, in 1968, testing results consistently demonstrated higher performance among children in the bilingual sections.[4]

In the second year of the program, most of the children who had been in bilingual classes were reassigned to the experimental classes, and in 1968-69, the third year of the experiment, 75 percent continued in bilingual classes. The success of the program, reflected in markedly improved school attendance, led each year to an increase in the number of participating classroom units. By 1968-69, 60 percent of the children in the first three grades were in bilingual classes.

During each year of the bilingual experiment, from 1966 to 1969, Dr. Andersson and Dr. Boyer visited Del Rio two times for observation of classes and for

conferences with participating teachers and administrators. All teachers in the program attended the annual meetings of the Southwest Council of Foreign Language Teachers (now the Southwest Council of Bilingual Education), and in 1967 and 1968, several teachers participating in the summer Institute for Bilingual Teachers, held at the University of Texas at Austin under the direction of Dr. Andersson.

In 1968, before the opening of the fall school term, the Del Rio News-Herald carried a long article on the Garfield program and an editorial congratulating Waddell and the bilingual staff of the experiment for "leading the way" in serving a bilingual community. Bilingual education, the editorial stated, "teaches children two languages simultaneously for the dual purpose of making the Spanish-speaking child feel at home in school, proud of his natural heritage, and at the same time gives his English-speaking classmate the opportunity to become fluent in a second language." This pioneering effort "reflects credit on the entire city, and gives Del Rio's citizens pride in seeing a local school lead the way in such worthwhile undertaking."[5]

The accompanying article described the objectives of bilingual education and the program's operation at Garfield Elementary School. Below a euphoric headline proclaiming "School Dropout Problem Nears Solution in Del Rio," the newspaper described bilingual education as "a new and revolutionary program."

Del Rio's program also received national publicity. In 1969, Dr. Andersson, writing in Hispania, the journal of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, cited Del Rio, along with Dade County, United Consolidated and San Antonio I.S.D., as holding "much promise" for the development of bilingual schooling.[6]

The program, as it was introduced, was not, however, fully bilingual. Instead of roughly equal time for the two languages as media of instruction, Spanish was employed for only one and one-half hours each day. The "flip-flop" approach of alternating Spanish and English was used, but even with this method not all subject matter areas of the curriculum were taught bilingually. Spanish was used in areas of "cultural development" such as music and art, but it was not used in teaching reading and writing. The Mexican American child's first encounter with the written word continued to be in a language he did not understand.

In introducing bilingual education, the administration was wary of possible opposition from within the community. Several Spanish-speaking parents expressed concern that

their children would not learn English. There too was the potential opposition from Anglos.

Superintendent Tanksley, in later evaluating those first steps toward bilingual education in Del Río, recognized the problems: "We proceeded cautiously, unduly so, perhaps."[7] The sensitivity to the problems of community acceptance, especially among the Anglos, was expressed in Del Río's preliminary proposal for federal funding, under Title VII. Del Río's bilingual program would rest on the premise that "no aspect of the program shall be forced, no one required to participate if there is any personal objection to their participation, and if difficulties are encountered in advancing and expanding the program, modifications will be immediately introduced to the degree found necessary for the ultimate success of the program."[8]

In developing a bilingual program, Del Río looked to the experience of the few programs then underway--those in Dade County, Florida, Las Cruces, New Mexico, San Antonio I.S.D., and United Consolidated in Laredo, Texas. It was the United Consolidated program that seemed most to meet the needs of Del Rio, which, like Laredo, is a border town with very similar populations and problems. The design of the Del Río program was "strongly influenced" by that of United Consolidated, and the entire Del Río bilingual staff visited the Laredo school to observe classes and to confer with superintendent Harold Brantley and the bilingual program director. In the estimation of the Del Río superintendent, "the Laredo expectation of a program which employs Spanish and English by bilingual teachers to develop all subject matter area of the curriculum to realize the broadest goals of bilingual schooling seems a realistic one."[9]

In 1969, Del Río I.S.D. submitted an application for funding under Title VII for bilingual education. Del Río proposed to extend, with modifications, on a district-wide basis the program which it had successfully introduced in the Garfield school three years before.

Del Río I.S.D. had a total enrollment of some 5,200 students in the 1969-70 school year. Enrollment figures for the district's schools, according to an HEW report made the previous year, shows the distribution of children from Spanish-speaking families:[10]

TABLE I.

Percentage of Spanish-speaking Children in Del Río Schools (1968-69)

School	Grades	% of Span-speaking
Garfield Elementary	1-4	83
North Heights Elementary	1-4	37
East Side Elementary	1-4	11
Memorial Elementary	5-6	40
Junior High School	7-8	43
Senior High School	9-12	40

In addition, the district included two parochial schools, the Sacred Heart Academy (Catholic) and Saint James Episcopal Day School. The former was 51 percent Spanish-speaking; the later, 26 percent.

Del Río's bilingual program was designed to serve children in 25 classroom units, 20 of which were in the Garfield school, where bilingual education had been introduced on a limited scale in 1966. Two classroom units were to be at North Heights and two at East Side elementary schools. One unit was to be at Sacred Heart.

At Garfield school, the program involved kindergarten and grades 1 through 4. Of a total enrollment in 1969-70 of 790 pupils, 580 participated in the bilingual program, of whom 122 were English language monolingual children. At the North Heights, East Side and Sacred Heart schools, where bilingual education was introduced for the first time in 1969, only the first grade was included in the program. At North Heights, 60 children participated--all Spanish-speaking. At East Side, 56 children participated, 31 of whom were English monolinguals. At Sacred Heart, 30 children were involved, including 12 English monolinguals.

In search of bilingual teaching materials, many schools have turned to Mexico and have used instructional materials developed for Mexican schools. Del Río went one step further in bringing in a highly qualified teacher from Monterrey to teach first grade at the Garfield school

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and to work with other teachers in bilingual curriculum development.

In the preliminary proposal for federal funding, Superintendent Tanksley stated the broad objectives of the Del Río bilingual education program:

> (1) Implementation of programs for children whose first language is Spanish which will allow successful experiences in the education process while developing literacy in the use of English and Spanish in the total school curriculum and knowledge of the history and culture associated with the two languages;
>
> (2) Implementation of programs for children whose first language is English which will allow them to develop a literacy in Spanish and English and a knowledge of the history and culture associated with both languages and contribute to the creation of a truely bilingual community; and
>
> (3) Through such programs for children, augmented by adult programs, infusion into the entire community of knowledge and understanding which will enhance alleviation of problems which will prevail in proportion to the lack of ability to communicate.[11]

While not presenting bilingual education as the answer to all the problems of a bicultural society, the Del Río program projected ambitious social objectives: improved human relationships through the enhancement of mutual understanding and appreciation between the two cultures; development of economic opportunities through education; conservation of language resources in the national interest; and the creation of a school environment conducive to the psychological well-being of the individual.

The Del Río program rests on the supposition that "children learn best when their first school experiences are in the native language."[12] The program has sought, through the use of two languages:

> (1) to more effectively introduce the child to and to allow the child to become adjusted to the environment and requirements of the school;

(2) to better provide highly verbal early childhood experiences to augment those otherwise provided by a largely monolingual family environment;

(3) to more effectively teach children the skills and learning associated with the common subject matter areas of the curriculum;

(4) to create a more favorable environment for the social and emotional development of every child; and

(5) to better acquaint the children with the cultural and linguistic differences and similarities of the people who comprise the community[13]

Under the program, the child would be expected to have attained a normal level of achievement in curriculum subject matter by the completion of his sixth year in school.

In 1970-71, the Dallas Regional Office of HEW's Office for Civil Rights reviewed the Del Río situation. It concluded that a substantial number of Mexican American students had been excluded from effective participation in school programs because of their inability to speak and understand the English language. According to Del Río I.S.D. data, 75 percent of the Spanish-surnamed children entering the first grade had little or no knowledge of English. Testing results in the Del Río schools revealed that the educational performance of Mexican American students progressively declined each year as compared with both national norms and with the performance of Anglo children in the district. A review of enrollment patterns, in special education classes and in regular "grouped" classes, revealed a significant degree of ethnic isolation resulting from what amounted to segregation on language criteria.[14]

The Del Río bilingual program, for all the rhetoric of its objectives, was fundamentally directed toward the Mexican American child so as to provide a vehicle of assimilation into the dominant Anglo community. The program was bilingual only insofar as it sought to provide effective transition into the English medium of instruction. In its budget request to the federal government for continued funding under Title VII for

1971-72, the Del Río I.S.D. proposed to use bilingual education "as a means of bridging the language gap." It will be primarily concerned with dual language teaching "to provide the language competencies for the Spanish-speaking child so that he may be phased into and successfully compete in the classroom situation which is largely conducted in one language only-English."[15] The philosophy was one of transition: Spanish would be used to upgrade English capability.

Del Río justified this more limited approach by a lack of community support for a fully-developed bilingual program. In its application for continued funding for 1971-72, Del Río reduced its budget proposal from $105,000 (the funding level for the previous year) to only $25,000. The whole program in bilingual education was scaled down accordingly. Advised by the federal government that Title VII funds would be provided as "seed money" for five years, after which the local district would then assume full responsibility, Del Río in its reduced budget was in effect telling the government that it was unwilling to make continued commitment to bilingual education on the level demanded by the Office of Education.[16]

Justifying Del Río's position, the 1971-72 application indicated that "critics, influential representatives of both language groups, have questioned the rationale for bilingual schooling" and that the program was altered "so that a program may evolve which is less subject to the vitiating criticism of partisan elements." Fundamentally, the Del Río administration contended, the critics questioned "an educational philosophy which recognizes the use of a language other than English, the national language, in the schools of the United States."

> This criticism, an expression by both English-speakers and Spanish-speakers, likely has its origin in divergent views. That of the English-speakers, it is thought may be one of national pride, now that our sense of patriotism seems to be at low ebb. The Spanish-speaking critics, however, may be viewing the school as the primary institution to assist their children to enter the mainstream of American life through acculturation. That is, they view the school as a repository of qualities and attitudes that are characteristically American and are sources of success in our society. If their children are to become "American" and share in the fruits of this culture, they question the dilution

> of the program of the traditional school through the use of another language or placing further emphasis on the culture and heritage of other peoples.[17]

The Office of Education was unimpressed by the Del Río argument. "A transitional program which is designed to focus on the utilization of first language skills only until such time as the children with limited English-speaking ability can function in the regular English curriculum does not constitute, in our view, a plan adequate to meet established program requirements governing the operation of all Title VII programs." Continuing funding of the Del Río program would be "contingent upon satisfactory assurance that the current target population, both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking, will continue to receive bilingual instructional services as they progress through the school program."[18]

Del Río was unwilling to provide such assurance. Waddell, writing on behalf of Del Río, stated that modification of the program was made "on the basis of factors in the local situation which indicate the need for change in the interest of better education for our children." Waddell continued:

> A remotely situated government authority with tenuous connection with our local education agency is not favorably placed to prescribe the program or give the direction for its application. Therefore, this professional concern for the welfare of our students suggests that we not comply to your stipulated conditions for conformity. In our opinion, they are arbitrary and capricious.[19]

After two years' Title VII funding, Del Río was dropped from federal support.

While Del Río I.S.D. was almost equally divided between Anglos and Mexican Americans, San Felipe I.S.D.'s population was 98 percent Mexican American. The district had been formed in 1929 so as to provide Mexican American control over their own schools. The district, separated from Del Río I.S.D. by the San Felipe Creek which flows through the city, comprises an area of 52 square miles, but almost all the population is concentrated within the four square miles which fall within Del Río. The San Felipe schools--four elementary schools, one junior high and one high school--were located in this area of heaviest concentration. With some 2,500 students in

1969, school facilities, especially the elementary schools, were taxed to capacity with classes averaging over 30 pupils.

Val Verde county, in which Del Río is located, is predominantly ranching country, and many of the residents of the San Felipe community are ranch hands. Some 20 percent of the families migrate for seasonal employment within and outside the state.

In 1969, at the time San Felipe applied for federal funding under Title VII, the Mexican American students of the district were two to four years behind their Anglo counterparts by the time they reached the eighth grade. Handicapped by an inability to cope with the English medium of instruction, older than their peers and with little to look forward to in continuing school, they frequently dropped out at the first opportunity. In San Felipe, the dropout rate at the junior high level was 2.7 percent and rose to 8.5 percent at the high school level.

In 1968, Del Río and San Felipe had explored the possibility of submitting a joint proposal for Title VII funding, but each district was to maintain separate bilingual programs and budgets. This was unacceptable to the Office of Education, and each district, in 1969, submitted its own program. Waddell, however, was instrumental in getting the San Felipe program off the ground. Del Río was originally to have received $110,000 in Title VII funds, but at Waddell's initiative, in order to bring San Felipe under the federal umbrella, the money was shared on a 50/50 basis between the two districts. Each began Title VII programs in 1969-70 at $55,000.[20]

The San Felipe program was to be closely patterned after that of Del Río, with which the community was already familiar and which had received favorable publicity in the local press. The proposal was prepared by San Felipe Superintendent Homero C. Sigala and bilingual project director J.B. Peña. The program was initiated with the first grade in 1969-70 and was projected in its development to expand with an additional grade each succeeding year through the sixth grade.

The major objective of the program was to meet the special educational needs of the children who came from homes where Spanish was the mother-tongue in order that they may develop a greater proficiency in both English and Spanish. Specifically, the program was "to bring the children up with the national norms of the rest of the country," as measured through a variety of testing

instruments.[21] The program was to have both bilingual and bicultural components. The broad aims of the program were: (1) through the use of Spanish as the first medium of instruction, to provide a stimulus to the acquisition of knowledge and continued intellectual growth; (2) to foster in the child "a feeling of belonging" and an "adequate concept of self"; (3) to develop a sense of pride in the cultural and historical heritage and contribution of the Mexican American; (4) to provide for the physical well-being of the students in the program through reactional activities and through health services and facilities; and (5) to secure a closer relationship between teachers and parents of children in the program and to invite the parents themselves to participate in "adult basic classes" conducted by the school district.[22]

To effect greater community involvement, a Bilingual Advisory Council was established. Each P.T.A. in the four elementary schools named two representatives, and they in turn reported on program developments to their P.T.A.'s. The Council also included representatives from the G.I. Forum (a Mexican American veterans' organization committed to the social, economic, and political advancement of the Mexican American) and the San Felipe Lion's Club and parents from each of the bilingual classroom units. The Advisory Council sought to inform the community about the nature and objectives of bilingual education and to keep providing continuing information on program developments. The Council encouraged classroom visits by parents, as well as teacher's visits to homes, and volunteers from the community were sought as teacher aides, room mothers, and resource personnel. Information on the program was provided to civic clubs and to the Del Rio News-Herald and Las Novedades, the Spanish language newspaper. The Council, in addition to providing a link from the school to the community, served also as a continuing monitor on the bilingual program, advising the administration on possible improvements. The Advisory Council met formally seven times each year. In an evaluation report by the Texas Education Agency in 1970, parental involvement was underscored as one of the strong points of the San Felipe program. Several meetings to inform the community about bilingual education were described as "tremendously successful." While the San Felipe administration sought extensions into the community, it was at the same time sensitive to the problem of "over-selling" the program--of creating a utopian expectation which could never be fulfilled by even the most successful bilingual program.

Within the San Felipe district, there was a private Catholic elementary school, invited by San Felipe to participate in the bilingual program.

Under San Felipe's application for federal funding, all children in the district's schools, beginning with the first grade, would be included. Sixty percent of the participating children fell within the specified poverty guidelines, with families earning less than $3,000 yearly. Non-Spanish speaking students (the 20 blacks in the school and any possible Anglo English monolinguals) were to participate in the bilingual program, learning Spanish as their Mexican American classmates learned English.

The character of the program in the first grade involved the teaching of a particular subject in both Spanish and English, with the English component increasing in the course of the year from 30 to 40 percent at the beginning to about 60 percent by the second semester.

In an early statement of performance objectives, undated, it was specified that the "main objective" was the gradual transition from Spanish to English. "Once the teacher has instilled confidence in the child she can then proceed both in using the child's mother tongue and adding English gradually. Eventually the instruction will be in English but the child's mother tongue must not be abandoned."23 It was not indicated how the continued use of Spanish would be sustained.

The San Felipe program projected 28 percent funding from Title VII, 24 percent from Title I (Economically Deprived), 14 percent from Title I (Student Migrant), and 34 percent from state and local sources. The bilingual staff, in the first year, 1969, included 14 bilingual teachers, all Mexican American.

In the first year, there were to be 60 kindergarten and 390 first grade children participating in the program, of whom 25 were to be from the parochial school.

Laughlin Air Force Base, located in San Felipe I.S.D., had from the time the base was constructed sent children of Air Force personnel to the Del Río I.S.D. schools. Without facilities to handle the Air Force pupils and under considerable pressure, the San Felipe school board in 1956 waived all rights to educate the Laughlin children. The Val Verde County Board of Trustees, having authority to grant or deny requests for school transfers, applied a "free transfer rule," that is, any child is transferred at the request of his parents, and all requests are granted. Transferred children are charged tuition unless they are federally connected, in which case they are

admitted free of tuition because of the "impact aid" received in lieu of taxes. Because Del Río I.S.D. served the Air Force children, numbering nearly 800, the district received impact aid from the federal government--some $360,000 annually--while financially strained San Felipe received relatively little federal assistance. Furthermore, no school tax was paid on air force property to the San Felipe district.

When Homero Sigala became superintendent of San Felipe in 1967, he began efforts to end the agreement. He complained to federal officers at a conference on Mexican American problems at El Paso and again in 1968 at the U.S. Civil Rights Commission hearings in San Antonio. In 1971, the Texas Education Agency began turning down requests for transfer from one district to another, because such transfers sustained a pattern of segregated schooling. TEA then threatened to suspend accreditation of all districts accepting such pupil transfers. This would mean loss of state and federal funds for the districts. In a suit brought by 34 affected school districts, the matter came before the U.S. District Court at Tyler, Judge William Wayne Justice presiding. At immediate issue was Laughlin's request to transfer 729 pupils (47 blacks, 47 Mexican Americans, the rest Anglos) to the Del Rio schools.

With the prospect of Air Force children attending the overwhelmingly Mexican American San Felipe schools, the base began to receive requests from airmen for a transfer from Laughlin. Defense department officials suggested that they might have to close Laughlin, which contributes an estimated 50 percent of the Del Rio economy, if base children were forced into San Felipe schools.

In early August, the Del Río school board voted to request that the federal courts order the consolidation of Del Río and San Felipe districts and that TEA delay any sanctions until the request could be heard in court. The federal commissioner for education concurred, recommending that federal impact aid be given to the one consolidated district. The San Felipe district opposed the consolidation proposal. San Felipe's opposition was fundamentally the product of community pride and a sense of local control. The school district was in serious financial crisis and the maintenance of the separate, almost wholly Mexican American district did, no doubt, sustain de facto segregation, but the schools were in the hands of the Mexican American community itself. It was regarded as a base of power for the Mexican American community, and the school had produced

many of the community's leaders. Moreover, the school district was a substantial employer in the area. In opposing consolidation, San Felipe I.S.D. argued instead for mandatory attendance of Air Force pupils in San Felipe schools.

In the meantime, events in Del Río were having repurcussions in Washington. The Civil Rights Commission, working since 1968 to desegragate the Del Río schools, accused the Air Force and the Department of Defense of trying to maintain segregation in Del Río. The Air Force, ironically, was seeking to retain a system of segregation through busing, at the same time the Nixon administration was underscoring its opposition to busing to achieve integration. Howard A. Glickstein, director of the Civil Rights Commission, speaking before the House Judicial Civil Rights Oversight Subcommittee, described the Del Río situation as "a microcosm of the whole national problem" and a "prime example of the intransigence of federal agencies in dealing with the problem."[24]

The Air Force denied that it had threatened closure of the base. Its sole concern, it was stated, was for the quality of education and that it was simply a question of the already over crowded and financially-burdened San Felipe schools handling the influx from Laughlin.

On August 6, Judge Justice ordered consolidation of the two districts. The overall plan of the court, he emphasized, was to abolish minority schools. By his directive, no school or classroom was to be more than 66 percent Mexican American. In an editorial, the Del Río News-Herald strongly endorsed the consolidation ruling:

> The very magnitude of these problems (inherent in the dual system of schools) is probably the main reason people in both districts have been reluctant to face up to them until this was forced upon us.
>
> In this history-making decisions, the United States of America has guaranteed to the citizens of this community that all of our children will be provided with AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY to obtain a QUALITY EDUCATION.
>
> In any analysis, big winners in this decision are the children of this community.
>
> ...with San Felipe Creek ceasing to be an artificial barrier dividing our community will bridge the way for solving many problems which have long plagued Del Rio.[25]

The Texas Education Agency accepted the consolidation order as educationally and fiscally sound. Remaining at issue, however, was the method of consolidation and the question of a special curriculum which would provide Mexican American pupils equal educational opportunity.

Del Río, San Felipe, and HEW each had their own plans.

The first matter settled was the constitution of the new school board. Judge Justice specified that four members of the former San Felipe board should join the seven members of the existing Del Río board to form the body of trustees which would govern the consolidated district until the next regular school board election. Of the newly constituted board, 6 were Anglo (all from the old Del Río district), and 5 were Mexican American.

The district was to be known as the San Felipe-Del Río I.S.D. Del Río I.S.D. superintendent O.B. Poole, Jr. (business manager under Tankley's administration) became superintendent of the new consolidated district; Homero Sigala became Assistant Superintendent; R.J. Waddell became Instructional Supervisor; and J.B. Peña, former bilingual project director at San Felipe, became the project director for the consolidated district.

HEW's "Comprehensive Educational Plan" for Del Río was fundamentally concerned with bilingual education.[26] Designed to ensure that all students in the consolidated district would be offered equal educational opportunities, the plan followed the order of the Court that "safeguards shall include, but shall not necessarily be limited to, bilingual and bicultural programs, faculty recruitment and training, and curriculum design and content." Under the plan, assignments of teachers and administrators would be made so as to ensure an ethnic ratio in each school substantially the same as for that in the district as a whole. The plan further projected a long-range goal of an ethnic ratio within the schools that reflected the ethnic composition of the district community.

In curriculum design, the Comprehensive Plan recognized "the cultural and linguistic pluralism of the student body" and sought to provide "equal opportunity for reinforcement and expansion of that pluralism." Underlying the recommendations of the HEW Advisory Committee on Bicultural Education, which drafted the plan, were three basic principles"

> (1) that the cultural and linguistic pluralism of the San Felipe-Del Río Independent School District student body necessitates the utilization of instructional approaches (in addition to those now used) which reflect the learning styles, background, and behavior of all segments of the student community; modification of curriculum design, and the development of new instructional skills and materials are part of the development of pluralistic instructional approaches;

(2) that the educational program of the district should incorporate, affirmatively recognize, and value the cultural environment and language background of all of its children, so that the development of positive self-concepts in all children of the district can proceed apace;

(3) that language programs to be implemented that introduce and develop language skills in a secondary language (English for many Mexican-American students; Spanish and Anglo students), while at the same time, reinforcing and developing language skills in the primary language so that neither English nor Spanish is presented as a more valued language.

From these principles, the Plan delineated a program of curriculum development from an early childhood education program through high school. The Early Childhood Education Program would be aimed at economically disadvantaged children between the ages of 3 and 5. The program would focus on "the development of basic cognitive skills as well as the development of bilingual (Spanish and English) capabilities in children." In kindergarten through the fourth grade, the medium of instruction would be the child's mother tongue (Spanish or English), with emphasis on developing language proficiency in English and Spanish as a second language. The program would be implemented in all cases within the context of heterogeneous classroom composition, each classroom unit including both native Spanish and English speaking pupils, migrant and handicapped pupils. Individual student needs would be met through the use of small groups within the classroom, as characterize the open classroom concept.

In grades 5 through 8, instruction would be conducted in "the child's preferred mode of communication," at the same time that his second language would be developed. At this level, special attention would be given to the "development of culturally relevant, fair and reinforcing instructional materials in social studies." Effort would be made to eliminate "all stereotyping, historical misrepresentations, and other negative cultural presentations." In the higher grades, a comprehensive counseling program would seek to decrease the drop-out rate and to increase the availability of academic options open to students entering high school as well as their receptivity to these

alternatives. In high school, English would be the medium of instruction, with Spanish continued as a foreign language course, and instruction in English as a second language would be available as required on an individual prescriptive basis. A bicultural curriculum would reflect the pluralistic character of the community, and, as in the elementary schools, the classroom environments would be "heterogeneous in terms of race, ethnicity and socio-cultural background."

An essential element of the HEW Plan was active parental and community involvement in the decision-making and operation of the educational program. Accordingly, the Plan specified that for each school, an elected nine-member School Community Council should assist the school district in formulating educational objectives and should make a yearly evaluation of the district's program.

The Del Rio News-Herald, which had lauded consolidation, attacked the comprehensive educational plan as a "radical experimental" design.[27] The Del Rio I.S.D. response to the Court order, rather than submitting its own plan, was to file an appeal contesting the venue of the Court action and complaining particularly of the Court's order relating to bilingual and bicultural education. The motion for stay of the Court's order was denied by the Court of Appeals. The school board then informed the Court of Appeals that the matter in controversy had been "settled" in an agreement upon a new comprehensive plan between the board and the Department of Justice. The board and the Justice Department jointly moved the court to remand the civil action to trial court, with the direction that the trial court adopt the plan agreed upon. Refusing to accept the motion, the Court of Appeals returned the case to the District Court of Judge Justice "for further proceedings."

In the hearings then held it was revealed that although four former members of the San Felipe school board had been made members of the interim board of the newly consolidated district by order of the Court, not one of them had been notified of nor had they participated in the negotiations with the Department of Justice. It was further revealed that any efforts by the school board to obtain federal funds to implement the court-ordered educational plan had been "extremely tentative, desultory and ineffective." Considering "the undisguised hostility" of the former members of the Del Rio board to the Court's plan relating to bilingual-bicultural education, the

Court challenged the good faith of the board in attempting to implement the plan.

On the basis of all evidence, Judge Justice announced the Court's adoption of a Comprehensive Educational Plan for San Felipe-Del Río Consolidated Independent School District. The Court's plan was, virtually word for word, that earlier submitted by HEW. The Court ruled that those elements of the plan now carried on in the district would be continued; that additional elements of the program would be immediately implemented from available sources; and that the district would make all efforts to secure sufficient funds from federal, state, and other sources so as to implement all elements of the Comprehensive Plan.[28]

The Court's ruling in the Del Río case was based on the Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In a memorandum opinion, Judge Justice stated that the Fourteenth Amendment is not directed solely against discrimination based on differences between white and black.[29] The mandate of the Supreme Court is to "eliminate discrimination root and branch,"[30] and the question of segregated schools on the basis of ethnicity or national origin is not fundamentally different from that involving the discriminatory treatment of black students.

The Court Order desegregating the Del Río schools and creating a unitary system in the consolidation of the two districts followed the guidelines suggested by the Supreme Court--that no child "will be effectively denied equal educational opportunities"[31] and that the school system shall exhibit the "greatest amount of actual desegregation possible."[32] The Court was also concerned about the need to avoid stigma of inferiority akin to the "badges and indicia of slavery"[33] which were the product of racial discrimination against the black; "To avoid this result," Judge Justice wrote,

> the Anglo-American students too must be called upon to adjust to their Mexican-American classmates, and to learn to understand and appreciate their different linguistic and cultural attributes. The process by which all students participate in a joint learning and adjustment process will not only constitute an educational enrichment but, also, will bring the school system as a whole closer to that goal or state-of-being referred to by the Supreme Court as a "unitary system." It is with this goal in mind, therefore--that of true integration as opposed to mere desegregation or, as Texas news

media are wont to term it, "racial mixing"--that the Court issued its major order in the case of the San Felipe Del Rio Consolidated Independent School District.[34]

The opposition to the bilingual program that had existed within the community, especially among Anglo parents of Del Rio I.S.D., was deepened by the Court ordered consolidation and its requirement that instruction from the first through the twelfth grade be both bilingual and bicultural.

The Court Order necessarily created considerable disorganization as the schools rushed to implement consolidation. In the shift of students, accomplished through busing, all kindergarten children were located at one school; all first and second grades were at three elementary schools on the San Felipe side of the city; grades three through six were at schools on the Del Rio side. The balance in each classroom was approximately 65 percent Mexican American, 35 percent Anglo, in compliance with the Court Order.

At the beginning of the school year, the St. James Episcopal School, with grades one through four, received a heavy influx of new students, as did the Catholic Sacred Heart School. A few Anglo families, embittered by the Court Order, moved out of the district altogether. One Anglo parent who had taken his children out of the Del Rio schools saw Spanish as becoming the language of the school: "These people are interested in building a new Quebec in South Texas."

Resentment was especially intense among monolingual teachers, fearful that their jobs were threatened. They saw the Court Order specifying ethnic balance among teachers as meaning that qualifications would be bypassed. Many teachers were concerned about the impact of the Order on education. "Educational philosophies," one cynically said, "change with political times. We have shifted from a concern with quality to one of leveling." The point at issue was the elimination of "tracking," by which students could proceed at excelerated speed in their best subjects. The result, it was surmised, was "to mix all the kids together in a bicultural context--with the slow ones lost and the bright ones bored." Dan Bus, editor of the Del Rio News-Herald, voiced the same concern: "Bilingual education penalizes the Mexican-American and does not benefit the Anglo. It does little more than satisfy a judge's ruling." He argues that while the concern for the educational needs of the Mexican American are fully justified, the response should

not come at the expense of the needs of all children. The real question, he says, is how Del Río's children--both Anglo and Mexican American--will do in the outside world if the Del Río schools are not in gear with the national culture. Bus is convinced that bilingual education limits the opportunity of the Mexican American for advancement by inhibiting the development of English. He argues further that the costs of bilingual education will be borne by Anglo students who will spend their time studying Spanish rather than substantive subjects. The subjects themselves cannot be taught in Spanish medium of instruction, he contends, for in a transient society, students will come in to the school system without the linguistic capacity to handle, for example, mathematics or science taught in Spanish. Bus cites the fact that less than half of the 1972 graduating class of Del Río High School started in the school system. Moreover, children leaving Del Río to go elsewhere are going to be penalized, he says, for they will fall behind. "Coming in or going out--bilingual education is going to cause problems." Perhaps most grating for Bus, as for many Del Río citizens, is what he sees as federal intervention. He feels that they have lost control over the education of their children.[35]

With a delay of one week in school opening, the new year began with 56 classrooms in the bilingual program, grades K through 2, and, on a limited basis, in the third grade. About half of the teachers were Anglo, but only 8 of these were able to handle any Spanish at all. The problem of the English monolingual teacher was to be met through team-teaching. The situation was wholly unsatisfactory, and at midyear, with the agreement of program officials in Washington, the number of bilingual classrooms was reduced to 28, and only genuinely bilingual teachers were used. Eighty-six percent of the children in the program were Mexican American. With this rough beginning, the program was expanded in the following year, 1971-72, from 800 to over 2,000 participating students, with an increase in bilingual teachers from 28 to 80.

Bilingual education has now been extended through the fourth grade, with almost all children in kindergarten through the second grade in bilingual classrooms. The program, however, is basically directed toward the Mexican American child, with the aim of providing in the use of Spanish as a medium of instruction a bridge to effective English usage. The Anglo children are really involved in a Spanish as a Second Language program and receive no more than 10 percent of their daily instruction in Spanish.

"This program, as always," Del Río's application for Title VII funding stated, "recognized English as the formal language of instruction, but uses the child's home language in order that he may derive a beneficial effect upon his education. ...This objective will also prevent retardation in school performance until sufficient command of English is attained." (italics added).[36]

The San Felipe-Del Río district in 1972-73 was funded through Title VII at $134,000. With one year of federal funding to go, Del Río, with its limited tax base, hopes the state will pick up the bilingual tab. With the squeeze on Title VII itself, no new programs can be introduced, and across the board funding in the next year will be reduced by 10 percent. The district is reaching out for federal assistance through other programs to support bilingual education--the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA), for example, which has a bilingual component.

Del Río, however, remains frustrated by what it regards as "outside control." "The Title VII guidelines are reasonable," says J.B. Peña, "but the interpretations are not. Each program has to be tailored to the local district."[37] The Board is willing to go along with the present bilingual program--but the members remain unconvinced and unenthusiastic.

Consolidation and busing to achieve ethnic balance has reduced the neighborhood identity with the school. PTA, cub scouts, and other extra-curricular groups have been scattered and have lost their community base. A tri-ethnic committee has been established to smooth over problems as they emerge, but the district has had difficulty in getting Anglos to serve. Peña contends that the opposition to bilingual education within the community which had been stirred by the Court's ruling has now subsided. The community, he says, had "pulled together." On April 7, 1973, school board elections were held--and all four incumbents were returned unopposed. Peña suggests this can be taken as positive support for the Board. "The bilingual program is today no longer an issue."[38] Few Del Río citizens would agree. One man expressed it in an attitude of helplessness. "Only 114 people voted. What good does it do when the Feds are telling you what to do?"

Chapter III.

CRYSTAL CITY

Crystal City was once famous as "The Spinach Capital of the World" and for the six-foot statue of Popeye which stands in the center of the town. Today, this small South Texas town is better known as the symbol of Mexican American resistance to Anglo domination. It is the birthplace of La Raza Unida. It is, for the Chicano, Cristal, "Capital of Aztlán."[1]

One hundred miles southwest of San Antonio and fifty miles from the Mexican border, Crystal City is in an area known as the Winter Garden, dry scrubland developed after the turn of the century for the production of a winter vegetable crop. Unlike Laredo and many of the towns of South Texas, which had been founded by Spanish explorers or later by Mexican settlers, Crystal City was an Anglo commercial venture founded in 1907. Mexicans were brought in as stoop-laborers for the fields, and, as one writer on the city relates, "if they didn't like it they could always 'go back to Mexico.'"[2] The Mexicans--economically dependent and thus vulnerable--soon gained an overwhelming majority within the community, but Anglo control went unchallenged.

Crystal City's boom leveled off during the depression, and as employment opportunities declined, laborers no longer poured across the border into tne Winter Garden. Instead, an annual exodus began from Crystal City, as more than half of the town's Mexican American population joined the migrant stream to the north, leaving in the spring and returning to Crystal City in the fall for the winter crop. Seasonal migration provided a widened horizon of experience for the Mexican American, and however exploitive the migrant situation might be, it gave him new mobility and freedom from economic dependence on the Crystal City Anglos. The economic position of the Mexican American--and of Crystal City itself--was dramatically improved just after World War Two with the establishment of a large Del Monte cannery. But with the California-owned plant came unionization. By 1956, the Teamsters had secured recognition and had begun to organize the Mexican Americans of Crystal City.

Even with Del Monte, the Mexican Americans of Crystal City remained poor. In Zavala County, in which Crystal City is located, 97 percent of the land is owned by 15

percent of the people--mostly Anglos. All 26 major landowners--those holding 300 acres or more--are Anglo, and of these, 18 live outside the county and 4 outside the state. The medium income (including that of the Anglo) is $2,314, and there are 359 families earning less than $1,000 per year.3 Furthermore, with one of the highest dropout rates in the state, few Mexican Americans ever went beyond the first few grades in school. The median educational level for the county--Anglos included--was 1.8 years in 1950, and by 1960, it had risen only to 2.3 years.

The city fathers, secure in their belief that things remained fully under control, paid little attention to the quiet voter registration drive in 1962 aided by the Teamsters. By the deadline for registration, 1,139 Mexican Americans had paid their poll taxes and were on the election rolls. Only 538 Anglos had paid. The Teamsters now took a more active role, but their efforts to put together a slate of Mexican Americans willing to challenge the Anglos yielded only five candidates ("Los Cinco"), not one of whom had graduated from high school or had been previously active within the Mexican American community. The campaign brought in assistance from not only the Teamsters, but from PASO, the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations, which had been formed out of the Viva Kennedy Clubs of the 1960 presidential campaign. The candidates embarrassed the more middle-class Mexican Americans, who had one of their own on the incumbent city council, and the appearance of "outside agitators" fueled the anger of the Anglos over the course of events.4

The alliance of the middle-class Mexican American and the Anglo did little to quell increasing enthusiasm for Los Cinco's challenge to Anglo leadership. The final rally of the campaign, on election eve, drew a crowd of more than 1500 supporters, and the results the following day secured a sweeping victory. "The nature of the victory--the inexperience of the candidates, the dependence upon outside help, and the vulnerability of the Mexican community in a town which had always been dominated by Anglos--came back to haunt all those who had worked for the success."5 The day after the election, the Anglos began to turn on economic pressure. One of the elected candidates lost his job; another found his salary cut in half; and a third was simply bought off. The new mayor, Juan Cornejo, business agent for the Teamsters at the Del Monte plant, immediately came into conflict with the new city manager, a very able Mexican American engineer who had been brought in by the Teamster-PASO coalition.

According to the city charter, it was the city manager and not the elected mayor who ran the city--and this did not square with the new mayor's aspiration to become caudillo of Crystal City. The Teamsters fired Cornejo, but the deadlock between the mayor and the city manager immobilized the city government and quickly dulled the luster of the electoral victory over the Anglos.

The Anglos prepared for the next election and began to court the "better Mexican element." Middle-class Mexican Americans joined the Anglo leadership in a coalition called the Citizens Association Serving All Americans (CASAA). The electoral slate--three Mexican Americans and two Anglos--promised to bring "stability and local control back to Crystal City." Sensitive to the charges of outside interference, the Teamsters and PASO stayed out. The Mexican Americans were bitterly divided in 1965, and in a heavy turnout, the voters defeated Los Cinco and returned the "establishment" to power.[6] This new coalition, John Schockley argues, had become "all the more necessary as traditional means of intimidation became less effective, both because of changes in federal and state laws and enforcement, and because the Mexican community was becoming better able to counter this intimidation."[7] From 1965 onward, the majority of the city council was always Mexican American, but until the rise of La Raza Unida in 1970, the town remained effectively in Anglo control, and nowhere was this more oppressively manifest than in the Crystal City schools.

Before 1925, there were no schools in Crystal City for Mexican Americans. In that year, however, several small Mexican elementary schools were opened. Any Mexican American who continued beyond the elementary level--and there were few--could enter the integrated high school. In 1954, following the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education, the Anglo elementary school was "integrated" to include a token handful of Mexican American and black children, but until 1960, the other elementary schools were totally Mexican American. In 1960, an organized protest with the threat of legal action ended the pattern of de facto segregation in the Crystal City schools, but while the schools were integrated, "Anglos still tended to be separated from Mexicans in individual classrooms."[8]

The protest, involving some 500 Mexican Americans led by the Mexican Evangelical Baptist Minister and a postal carrier, did not survive the satisfaction of its demands. In 1963, at the same time of the city council elections, two Mexican Americans ran for the school board. With the

larger territory and rural Anglo population of the school district, however, the Mexican Americans were unable to match the success of Los Cinco in the city elections. The two candidates made a sufficiently impressive showing to lead the Anglo board a year later--in a tactical move of cooptation--to appoint a Mexican American to fill a vacancy created by a member's resignation. Thereafter, the seven-man school board always included one or two Mexican Americans.[9]

During this period, there was some improvement in the Mexican American-Anglo ratio on the school faculty. In 1960, the Mexican American teachers numbered only 10 percent; by 1968, more than a quarter of the faculty were Mexican American. The superintendent and all principals, however, remained Anglos. Most significantly, the number of Mexican American children in the schools began to increase. As the dropout rate declined, the student body became predominantly Mexican American. By 1968, 87 percent of the students were Mexican American. The dropout rate, however, remained staggering by national comparison. Even with the larger number of Mexican American children in school, the "push out" continued to exert enormous pressure with each succeeding grade beyond the nineth. Held back, tracked into special sections, Mexican American children more often than not were several years older than their Anglo classmates, and by adolescence, their shame and embarrassment became so intense that each school day was dreaded. Moreover, teachers rarely encouraged the students to stay on, and with each grade, the number of Mexican American students would decline. A survey taken in 1969 revealed a rate of 71 percent dropout by high school graduation among Mexican Americans entering the first grade in Crystal City.[10]

When the school had been predominantly Anglo, it had been the practice for the high school student body to elect the cheerleaders, but as the ethnic ration shifted, the system was changed so as to provide for selection by a faculty committee appointed by the principal. The unwritten rule was that three Anglos and one Mexican American girl would be chosen. In the spring of 1969, vacancies created by two graduating cheerleaders were to be filled. Both girls were Anglo. The faculty judges again chose two Anglos to fill their "quota," bypassing a Mexican American girl who was clearly as good as any trying out. When the selection was announced, two students, Severita Lara (then a sophomore), and Armando Treviño, presented a petition of grievance to the principal. He dismissed the protest, and the students took their case with new demands on other issues of discrimination to the superintendent, John Billings. Billings agreed to

adopt an explicit quota system for cheerleaders--three Anglos and three Mexican Americans. The other demands--concerning the election of twirlers, class favorites, and the establishment of bilingual-bicultural education--would be given further consideration.

Anglo reaction to Billings' concessions was anxious and critical. After the schools had closed for the summer, the school board over-ruled Billings's agreement with the Mexican American students. In response to the question of student representative, the Board issued a statement of policy that

> 1. Inasmuch as beauty is in the eye of the beholder the Most Beautiful and Most Handsome will be selected by the student body.
>
> 2. As twirlers and cheerleaders utilize a developed talent and perform as leaders of specially trained organizations they will be selected on the basis of demonstrated ability by judges (from) outside the student body.
>
> 3. As the choice of Most Representative Boy and Girl include all areas, the High School faculty will select these students using all available records.

In the Fall, Mexican American resentment was deepened in the face of the most blatant discrimination. Instead of having the football queen, as in the past, the Crystal City High School Ex-Students Association decided to elect their own queen for the annual homecoming game. The Association specified that for a girl to be eligible, one of her parents must have graduated from Crystal City High School. Under this "grandfather clause," only five Mexican American girls qualified for consideration. Moreover, only those whose parents had graduated from Crystal City High School were eligible to vote, and this "privilege" was accompanied by a one dollar poll tax. There was little chance for Mexican Americans to participate--except that the Exes decided that each class should have a float, paid for and decorated by the students, the vast majority of whom were Mexican Americans.[11]

Severita Lara, a leader of the protest the previous spring, mimeographed a handout protesting the procedure. She was suspended from school for three days. The next day, students appeared in school with brown armbands in protest of the suspension. After two days, partly as a result of

the intervention of a San Antonio attorney representing the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, Miss Lara was reinstated in school.[12]

On November 10, Mexican American parents and students presented the school board with a list of grievances and demands. In their meeting with the board, student leaders demanded that the restrictive clause of the Ex-Students Association be removed. The students petitioned, as well, for the election of class representatives, favorites, and cheerleaders by the student body. They demanded an end to discriminatory treatment by teachers; recognition of September 16 as a Mexican American holiday; and the addition of a Mexican American counselor to the staff. They demanded, moreover, bilingual education and bicultural content within the curriculum so as to embody the history of "Los Mexicanos."

It had been rumored for several days that if the Ex-Students Association was permitted by the board to hold the homecoming program on the field at half-time, Mexican American members of the football team and the band would walk out on the field at the time of the presentation. Faced with the threat that Mexican American students would disrupt the coronation, the board reluctantly voted to deny the Association the right to crown their queen at the homecoming game.

Having backed down, the board was now subjected to renewed pressure over the remaining demands. Anglos attacked the board as soft and for having "sold out" under pressure. Mexican American students--sustained by rallies and by the heated reaction of the Anglos--prepared for a school boycott. At the next board meeting, some 300 parents and students gathered at the designated time. As one of the students in the protest later related it, the board placed the student demands as last on the evening's agenda. The students waited for two hours, and then, after the last remaining matter of business had been completed before the students were to have the floor, one of the board members moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried over the furious opposition of the Mexican American students. The board had treated them "like dirt and treated their parents as if they were nothing."[13] The school boycott began the next day. In the morning, just before classes were to begin, 300 students walked out. By the end of the afternoon, there were 500 to 600. The next day there were 800. Placards read, "We want an Education," "Chicanos want to be heard," "We demand our rights and equality."

Many parents joined their children in picketing the school. Olivia Serna, mother of Diana Serna, one of the

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strike leaders, related her feelings to a reporter from the San Antonio Express/News:

> I went to high school here. We were in the minority then, so we didn't complain. We felt they had the right to run things. We have had the feeling of inferiority. We're made to feel that way.
>
> When my kids came and complained, I said maybe we should take it, even though we know it's wrong. I didn't want to push them until they were ready for it. What we're doing now, we're expressing to our children something we know had been important for a long time. Something good is bound to come. At least they have spoken. You can't keep people down.[14]

The board refused to meet with the striking students, but it offered to meet "unofficially" with ten or fifteen parents. "As parents are the ones responsible for the students being in school, it is parents that we want to talk with."[15] The parents stood by the students, however, and refused to meet with the board. The intransigence of the board and the hostility of the Anglo community even brought a prodigal element of the Mexican American middle-class into the fold in support of the boycott. The boycott spread into the elementary school, and by the last day before the Christmas recess, some 1800 students in the Crystal City schools had joined the strike--absenses which cost the school thousands of dollars each day the strike continued. Meanwhile, school officials were "keeping a close watch on the situation."

In the last days of the strike, Mexican Americans also began a selective economic boycott directed against a Mexican American school board member and an Anglo businessman who had fired two employees involved in the strike.[16]

In the presentation of their demands and in the strike, students were advised by José Ángel Gutiérrez, who had returned the previous summer to Crystal City after serving as president of the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO). Gutiérrez had been president of the 1962 senior class at Crystal City High, and now with an M.A. in political science and the experience in MAYO, he had returned to his hometown with a commitment to help his own people bring an end to Anglo oppression.

Gutiérrez played a particularly important role in the formulation of the students' demands, for it was at his suggestion that the demand for bilingual-bicultural

education was included. At meetings with students and later at community rallies during the strike, Gutiérrez explained the goals and purposes of bilingual education.[17]

The student strike had captured national attention and the support of Mexican American activists throughout the state. During the Christmas holidays, a number of educators, mostly from San Antonio and organized by TEAM (Texans for the Educational Advancement of Mexican-Americans) held a "teach-in" in Crystal City to enable the striking students to maintain their studies during the boycott.

At this time, Senator Ralph Yarborough invited three of the boycott leaders to Washington: Saverita Lara, 17; Mario Treviño, 16; and Diana Serna, 15. Financing their trip through money raised by the Crystal City Youth Association in barbeques and dances and through a contribution from Project STAY, an organization devoted to helping students stay in school, the three Mexican American students flew off to Washington. Senator Yarborough arranged for them to meet with Senator Edward Kennedy and officials in the Office of Education and in the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Their trip prompted federal officials to examine the possibility that Crystal City might be in violation of Title IV of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Such violation was a matter of considerable import, for the act permits HEW to cut off funds of segregated school districts.

The Justice Department was drawn into the dispute and sent two mediators at the invitation of the board and the students. On January 4, 1970, after three negotiating sessions, an agreement acceptable to both parties was eventually reached, with the capitulation of the school board to almost every one of the students' seventeen demands. The agreement was signed by E.F. Mayer, president of the school board, by the representative of the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice, and by five parents and five students representing the boycotters.

The agreement specified that no student would be penalized for participation in the strike, and to facilitate effective communications between school and community and to provide an "ombudsman" role, a ten-member parents' advisory committee would be formed--to be composed of 8 Mexican Americans and 2 Anglos to be selected by the high school students. The agreement finally brought the cheerleader selection into the hands

of the student body, while the twirlers and drum major would be selected by a joint committee of four non-resident band directors and four band members elected by the band. There would be a single baseball sweetheart, nominated and elected by the members of the team. (Previously, there were two baseball sweethearts on the predominantly Mexican American team--one was Anglo and the other Mexican American. There was only one football sweetheart, always an Anglo because the majority of the team was Anglo). The Most Representative Student was redesignated "Faculty Student Representative." School authorities agreed to look into specific complaints of discrimination against Mexican-Americans by Anglo teachers, to seek improved sensitivity among the staff to cultural diversity, and to employ a qualified bilingual counselor. September 16 (Dieciseis) would be recognized by a school assembly program. The school authorities furthermore promised to examine the problem of disparities in the ethnic composition of classes. Potentially most important, officials agreed to explore with the Texas Education Agency the development of bilingual and bicultural programs for the Crystal City school system.[18]

The students' victory served to sustain momentum, rather than to deflate it as it had done in 1960. Those supporting the strike, led by José Ángel Gutiérrez, now turned to the formation of La Raza Unida Party. The forthcoming school board and city council elections were to provide the vehicle for organizing the new third party.

Soon after the agreement had been reached, Superintendent Billings and the high school principal submitted their resignations. The incumbents for the three open seats on the school board did not file for reelection. The "establishment" succeeded in finding two Mexican Americans and one man of partly Mexican American heritage willing to run--no mean accomplishment considering the degree to which most of the middle-class Mexican Americans had fallen into the ranks of the strikers. In opposition, for the three places on the board, were José Ángel Gutiérrez and two La Raza associates. The basic issue, said board president E.F. Mayer, was "whether MAYO is going to take over or whether they aren't."[19]

Elections to the city council were to be held at the same time. A sweep of the five-man council, however, was no longer possible, as it had been in 1963 when Los Cinco took control. "Changing the political set-up so as to discourage a repeat of the 1963 disaster," Stockley writes, "the Anglo and middle-class Mexican-American coalition had successfully adopted a charter to provide for overlapping positions on the council, alternating three seats

up one year with two the next. For the Spring elections in 1970, only two of the five council seats were up for election."[20] The new charter also sought to discourage poor candidates by a property requirement for council membership. With the aid of the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund, the matter was resolved in court in favor of La Raza. The two council incumbents, one Anglo and one Mexican American, stood for re-election and were opposed by two La Raza candidates.

Shortly before the elections, Crystal City was showered with leaflets, in English and Spanish, denouncing Gutiérrez' militancy and warning that industry would be discouraged from moving into Crystal City. "There will be no progress for this town," it proclaimed, "unless we maintain a stable government."[21] In the campaign, La Raza was attacked as "un-American," and Gutiérrez was described as a dangerous radical--even a communist.

The elections brought La Raza a sweep of the contested seats on both the school board and the city council. Gutiérrez and his two colleagues in the race for the school board won with about 55 percent of the vote. Two days later, in the council election, the two La Raza candidates won by more than 60 percent. School board president Mayer warned, "These other communities better wake up, or they'll be facing the same thing."[22] In nearby Cotulla, voters elected their first Mexican American mayor in thirty years.

Results of the two elections--3 places on the seven-man school board and two on the five-man council--were not enough in themselves to turn power over to La Raza Unida, but on both the board and council, there was a critical swing vote which enabled La Raza to secure governing majorities. La Raza's effective power in Crystal City was circumscribed, however, by county authority. In the November 1970 elections, La Raza staged a write-in campaign to unseat the Zavala County officials, but for all La Raza's effort, the county commissioners, the county judge, and the sheriff--all Anglos--were reelected.

In the schools, however, La Raza had taken control with a 4-3 majority, and José Ángel Gutiérrez was elected board president.[23] But here too there were constraints. In a "midnight appointment" just before the election, the old board had hired a new superintendent, John Briggs, under a three-year contract. At the close of the 1969-70 school term, after five months with the Crystal City schools, Briggs was suspended "of all duties immediately for failure to carry out the orders of the school board." The board specifically cited Briggs's failure to implement bilingual and bicultural education in grades two and three

and failure to suspend aptitude tests until their merit could be determined.[24] Briggs' demands for a public hearing fell on deaf ears in Crystal City, and Ángel Noé González of Edinburg became the new superintendent.[25]

Anglo opposition to La Raza mounted. A "citizens' committee" urged Anglos to withhold taxes from the already financially strained school system. Among those withholding school taxes was an Anglo member of the board, who was, in turn, ruled ineligible to vote in board meetings until his back taxes were fully paid. The citizens' committee also tried to get the Texas Education Agency to revoke the district's accreditation, which would, if effected, cut off all state and federal funds. The Texas Classroom Teachers Association imposed sanctions on the Crystal City district, urging teachers not to accept jobs there. In apparent response to the anxieties of Anglo teachers in the system, the TCTA described Crystal City as having "deplorable teaching conditions."[26] Under threat of suit, TCTA finally withdrew its sanctions.

By the Fall of 1971, in one year of dynamic leadership, Superintendent Ángel González had radically transformed the Crystal City schools. All school administrators, with one exception, were Mexican American--and with the highest educational qualifications the district had ever had: and there were two Mexican American counselors. Rather than lose state and federal funding, Crystal City had been able to garner a massive input in aid through a variety of programs--the Free Breakfast Program, the National School Lunch Program, the Migrant Program, Youth Tutoring Youth, Night Tutoring, Career Opportunities, Opportunity for Youth in Education, Special Education, and the Adult Education Program.[27] For the educational life of the school, however, it was the bilingual program that was most critical.

In November 1970, Superintendent González submitted his preliminary proposal for regular Title VII funding.[28] Ninety-three percent of the children in the Crystal City schools are Spanish-speaking, and most of these come from families with incomes below $3,000 per year--well within Title VII guidlines. "Spanish-speaking children in our elementary schools," Gonzalez wrote in the formal proposal submitted later in the year, "lack proficiency in both English and their native tongue--Spanish. As a result, their work in the classroom is severely handicapped. This in turn has and can result in self-doubt on the part of the student coupled with lack of initiative....An educational system that does not provide for the appreciation and understanding of the rich cultural heritage that this minority possesses, not only denies a potentially

great asset to our democratic way of life but likewise minimizes the unique contribution these individuals can contribute to our own national American character and image."[29]

The Crystal City program in bilingual-bicultural education sought to

> cultivate pride in one's own heritage and a respect for the heritage of others,
>
> bridge the educational barrier Spanish-speaking children encounter in a totally English-oriented program,
>
> expunge the self-doubt most children develop especially during the first years in schools, and
>
> create a desire for further study in the language and history of other ethnic groups in the community, the state, and the nation.[30]

In the Fall, with local funding, Crystal City had initiated a limited bilingual program in the first and second grades. It was limited, however, only by funding and experience--not by commitment and enthusiasm. All classroom sections in the first and second grades were involved in the program. "The community, the board and the administration felt that the need for a bilingual program was so great that we could not affort to wait another year for federal assistance," González wrote.[31] In applying for Title VII funding for 1971-72, Crystal City sought to expand its program to include kindergarten and, the following year, the third grade. Regular funding, if granted, would begin only in the Fall. To provide interim assistance, Superintendent José Cárdenas of the Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio offered, with federal approval, to share Edgewood's Title VII funds with Crystal City. The Texas Education Agency's Office of International and Bilingual Education promoted and supported the idea. Edgewood, then in its second year under Title VII, had had long experience with bilingual education, beginning in 1965, as one of the first programs in the nation. Edgewood proposed to the Office of Education to set up a "satellite component" of its bilingual program in Crystal City. It would then assist in the development of its bilingual instructional program, curriculum, staff, and community involvement components. In the "piggy back" program, Crystal City received a grant of $32,000 in the spring to augment its initial program and to formally begin Title VII operations.

In its formal Title VII application for a bilingual education program, Crystal City projected its long-range goals as the development of "a model elementary bilingual program grades 1-6." It sought to provide a high degree of teacher competence in "learning and implementing bilingual-bicultural education: learning and developing the skills of experimenting, measuring, and evaluating; developing creativeness, imagination, and resourcefulness; understanding and developing cultural sensitivity in bilingual-bicultural classrooms and schools." In the bicultural component, the program sought to foster among the students an awareness and pride in their own heritage; to create an understanding and appreciation of the "second culture;" and "to help children, from the perspective of another culture, have a deeper understanding of themselves, their history and their future."[32]

Because of the critical importance of effective communication between the school and the parents, the program sought "to provide the community multiple opportunities to participate in school activities related to the bilingual program by: involving parents in a wide variety of instructional activities (and by) giving parents and other members of the community the opportunity to get involved in an advisory capacity to the bilingual program." Specifically, the program sought to provide the community with a better understanding of the objective of a bilingual program and to better understand the total school curriculum. It would involve parents in curriculum planning, in the development and preparation of program materials, and as aids and monitors within the schools. Through this involvement, in addition to promoting better school-community relations, it was hoped to foster a greater awareness within the community "of the contribution of the Mexican-American to the culture of the Southwest."[33]

In 1973, the Crystal City School Board accepted the following twenty-two recommendations for a Bilingual and Bicultural Program:

> (1) "To promote educational success on the part of the mono-lingual student, through permitting him to learn to speak, to read, to write, and to think in his vernacular (mother tongue) with limited exposure to listening and oral skills in a second language (English).
>
> (2) "The continued development by the mono-lingual student of his own language as he is learning to function successfully in the second language."

(3) "The continued development by the bilingual student in his dominant language for instruction while strengthening his second language through listening and oral activities."

(4) "The increased recognition by the total community (parents, teachers, administrators, students) of the importance of bilingualism, both the process and the product through Community Involvement."

(5) "That the Crystal City Independent School District (CCISD) will provide an environment which is conducive to learning.

a. Staff
b. Facilities
c. Materials

The development of an effective program that will give each student an opportunity to progress toward the stated goals."

(6) "The appraisal of the students' level of development of language, concepts, and experiences (avoiding testing in the student's second language until he has sufficient control of the language so that his true verbal abilities can be measured)."

(7) "That the Crystal City Independent School District (CCISD) recognizes the need for the development and implementation of a program which will assist each student in becoming proficient in both Spanish and English."

(8) "That a component must be included which deals directly with the student's culture and heritage beginning with Pre-Kindergarten and continuing through the twelfth grade."

(9) "That a component must be included which deals directly with the student's culture and heritage beginning with Pre-Kindergarten and continuing through the twelfth grade."

"That special attention will be given to develop in every child a positive identity with his cultural heritage, self assurance, and confidence."

"The historical Contributions and cultural characteristics identified with the Mexican American will become an integral part of the total program (Pre-K to 12). This will enable all students to understand and appreciate, in a positive sense, historical contributions and the rich culture of the Mexican and the Mexican American."

(10) "That the basic concepts initiating the child into the school environment will be taught in the dominant language of the child."

"All orientation to the classroom behavior and his patterns of social interaction with his peers will be developed by drawing from the child's experiences, concepts, and language which he brings from home."

(11) "That language development will be provided in the child's dominant language."

"The sequential development of the four language skills--listening, speaking, reading, and writing--will be continued in the language for which the child has already learned the sound system, structure and vocabulary. This enable the child to develop skills before having to learn a second language."

(12) "That language development will be provided in the child's second language."

"Teaching the listening and speaking skills by the use of the audio-lingual instructional technique prior to teaching the reading and writing skills, enabling every child to learn a second language. Unique in this component is the fact that a child does not have to relearn language skills. He will merely have to transfer those skills which he learned in his first language."

(13) "That subject matter and concepts will be taught in the second language of the child."

"Content areas will be taught in the child's second language, but not until after he has become literate in his own language. The teaching techniques are audio-lingual in order to insure the development of listening and speaking skills.

As the child's second language ability develops more content and other skills, reading and writing will be incorporated."

(14) "The acceptance of the position taken by researchers concerning teaching of reading. 'Research has strengthened the position that children must be taught to read in their mother tongue.'"

(15) "That bilingual children will be taught to read in their dominant language (stronger language). Only those children whose mastery of both languages is so strong that they can fully comprehend the beginning reading materials can receive instruction in either language, or both."

"In either case reading will be introduced in only one language. Reading in the second language will be delayed until the child becomes fully literate in his first language. We will not confuse the problems of learning a new language."

(16) "That reading in the second language be delayed until the child has learned to read in the first. The child should be able to read with ease anything placed before him. This will show us that he has internalized all the rules for decoding his language. In the case of Spanish we are dealing with phonetically transcribed language, so we expect the child to read easily, smoothly, with no hesitations or halts, and to decode any but highly complex new words."

"The better a child can read in his first language, the less trouble he will have learning to read in his second language, and the less he will confuse the decoding rules for the two languages."

(17) "That no recommendation as to grade placement be given at this point since it will vary with each child, with each language, with each class and each school. This will be determined for each child individually."

(18) "That oral English be stressed in order to familiarize the students with the sound of an unknown tongue following the basic order, the

development of the listening skills before introducing the child to the development of oral skills."

(19) "That children not be introduced to reading in the second language before they have learned to read well in their mother tongue; to do so would only mean that they would be almost as confused as if they were taught to read in English from the start."

(20) "That the Crystal City Independent School District (CCISD) accept the Paulo Friere method of teaching reading and writing in Spanish. That a thirty (30) minute period for this instruction be set aside."

(21) "That all curriculum from Pre-Kindergarten to grade twelve be reviewed and that all personnel begin immediately to develop new Spanish oriented curriculum. All materials which will be developed will reflect the Chicano culture and heritage."

(22) "That the Crystal City Independent School District (CCISD) accept Spanish and English on an equal basis as the official languages of the district."

The Crystal City Citizens Committee, led by Jack Kingsberry, was appalled at what was happening in their town. They were especially irritated by the band director's announcing the half-time formations at the football games in Spanish as well as English. Moreover, the Committee contended, the band's formation of a clenched fist pattern could leave no doubt as to Communist influence in the Crystal City schools. In a letter to the editor of the Zavala County Sentinel, the Committee described Communist activity within the high school and "the appearance of communist literature, advocating armed revolt." To cap their argument, the Citizens Committee cited the La Raza publication Cristal's description of Crystal City as the "capital of Aztlán." The Committee wanted to remind readers of the Sentinel that "the plan of 'Aztlán' has long been publicized in Communist revolutionary publications as a 'Mexican utopia, to be a republic within a republic,' standard old communist tactics of divide and rule."[34]

Kingsberry, a farm and ranch supply businessman, sees the town as dying. It has already lost population,

from over 9,000 in 1960 to 8,000 in 1970 and 7,000 in 1972. Business has drastically declined. Kingsberry himself moved his family out of Crystal City and into the Carrizo Springs school district, where his wife now teaches. He challenges the educational qualifications of the new teachers in Crystal City, but, even more, he questions their political and social character. The administration, he says, recruited teaching staff with advertisements in The Militant and with ads in underground papers in Berkeley and elsewhere. He sees the La Raza leaders in Crystal City as "outsiders" who teach hatred in the schools. It is not bilingual education, he contends, that leads people to withdraw their children from the Crystal City schools, but the calibre of the teachers.[35]

By the end of the 1971-72 school term, only 18 of the 2,700 students in the Crystal City public schools were Anglos. As school transfers are no longer permitted, by Court ruling, many families moved out of the district--some, like Jack Kingsberry, just over the county line in a house trailer. In 1971, however, at the initiative of several disgruntled Anglos, a private elementary school was opened in Crystal City. It began with 30 students and by the end of the year, it had 58--about one-third Mexican American. The school is governed by a seven-man board, two of whom (including the president) are Mexican American. The superintendent of the operation is R.C. Tate, who before his retirement several years ago had been superintendent of the Crystal City I.S.D. for eleven years. The school is conducted in the education departments of the Methodist and Baptist churches.[36]

While most Anglos never questioned the appropriateness of the church facilities for the school, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Stauber opposed the use of the church. The Methodist minister replied that it would indeed be desecration if the school was segregated, but "it is to be open to students of all races." The Staubers were one of the few Anglo families to keep their children in the public schools. Dr. Stauber, one of two physicians in the town, says, "We have had an opportunity to know the people in La Raza and have seen nothing that offends us....There is such a discrepancy between the facts and what is going around that we don't believe anything without checking it."[37]

A number of the Anglo families who have taken their children out of school have done so under pressure, according to Nevolina Jaime, Bilingual Education Director for the Crystal City schools. During the first year of

the program, 1970-71, a number of Anglo children were involved, and several Anglo parents personally expressed support for bilingual education. "Now," she says, "I believe that politics has made them change." Pressure has been put on those parents in favor of the program to withdraw their children from the Crystal City schools.[38] The real issue, says one member of the Advisory Council of parents, is that the Anglo cannot accept Mexican Americans in roles of leadership. "They don't want to be told by Mexican Americans what to do because they know there are a lot of Mexican Americans who are smarter than they are, and they don't want to accept this." The problem from the perspective of another Council member is not the mutual appreciation of language. It's not enough for the Anglo to "appreciate" Spanish: He must accept the equality of the Mexican Americans." He must understand that the Mexican American also has enough intelligence to run his own destiny, and this is what he can't admit."[39]

In 1972, the Citizens Committee reorganized as a more inclusive anti-La Raza coalition called "Amistad"--friendship in Spanish. The community was almost totally polarized, but a small number of middle-class Mexican Americans sided with the Anglos against La Raza. Kingsberry claims that among the 700 Amistad members, 35 percent are Mexican American. The number of Mexican Americans who oppose La Raza, he argues, is considerable, but they are subjected to intimidation and harassment, and most have gone along with the militants out of fear.[40]

Without doubt, however, many of those Mexican Americans who have opposed La Raza have done so under pressure from the Anglos in fear of their jobs. Anglos have fed upon the fears of the Mexican American parents by warning them that the schools are teaching only in Spanish and that their children will never learn English, the union card to a good job and perhaps a college education. Bilingual education has been presented as limiting the threshold of the child and his opportunity for advancement, rather than as providing the vehicle for an expanding world and a better grasp of both Spanish and English.

Reflecting a combination of pressure, lack of understanding, and genuine anxiety, 800 Mexican Americans signed a petition in the spring, 1973, protesting the twenty-two recommendations approved by the Crystal City School Board for The Bilingual and Bicultural Program. The accompanying letter to the U.S. Commissioner of Education argued that a program which "teaches in Spanish as a first language and in English as a second language,

only after the student has become proficient in English" deprives Mexican American children of educational opportunity.

It had always been observed that older children from Mexico, entering Crystal City schools with only a knowledge of Spanish, learned English quickly and rapidly outdistanced most of the Mexican American children who had been struggling with English since the first grade. The fact was that the child from Mexico, with a solid cognitive base in Spanish, could learn English better because he had begun his education in his mother tongue. Moreover, he was unemcumbered by the shame and self-doubt that the Mexican American child had experienced from the first day of school in being forbidden to speak the language of his home and heritage. But the scars of shame among those Mexican Americans of the aspirant middle-class are deep. Their unwillingness or inability to accept and embrace their Hispanic heritage has led, in many instances, to a view that Spanish is something to be overcome. This attitude reflects an "I made it by myself and they can too" syndrome, and rather than seeing bilingual education as facilitating their access into the dominant culture at the same time they sustain their own language and culture, it is regarded as a threat to economic betterment.

Those Mexican Americans who have joined Amistad in opposition to La Raza have been taunted with the names "vendido," sell-out, or "coco," brown on the outside, white on the inside. The Rev. Paul Vázquez, assistant pastor at the predominantly Anglo First Baptist Church moved to Forth Worth "to get his daughter out of the schools here." He denounced "all of this 'Viva La Raza' stuff....It's not ethnic pride but separatist feeling."[41] Ted Muñoz, the owner of a bakery and drive-in grocery, is one of the most vocally adamant of the Mexican Americans opposed to La Raza. He ran unsuccessfully for the school board against the La Raza candidate and now serves as president of the board for a private school in Crystal City. His business was boycotted by the larger part of the Mexican American community, and his daughter was subjected to such a continuous barrage of insults--"vendida"--that she was taken out of school. Muñoz moved to Carrizo Springs, but kept the business in Crystal City.[42]

Muñoz and others live under enormous strain, with an air of defeat and fear. There is an atmosphere in Crystal City of a revolutionary society--excitement and dedication

among the officials of the school for La Raza and paranoia and fear among the "outs." The tables have been turned, and the same techniques of intimidation which were once used to keep the Mexican American down are now used by La Raza to secure its power within the community. Every revolution has its victims, and Crystal City offers no exception.

There has been a revolution in Crystal City. Where a few years ago only a handful of Mexican American students survived the pressures to "drop-out," today, students are staying in school--not only with the expectation of high school graduation, but 80 to 90 percent of the seniors express plans to go on to college.[43] The Mexican American now stands with pride in his culture and speaks Spanish without shame.

Chapter IV.

SONORA

Sonora, "Capital of the Stockman's Paradise," is situated on the Dry Devil's River, 91 miles north of Del Rio. With only a little oil and gas and a flurry of tourist trade drawn to the Caverns, Sonora remains largely a ranching community--a center of sheep and goat raising. The wool house is the center of the town geographically, economically, and, as site of the annual "Fling Ding" and the New Year's stomp, socially as well. The town is bifurcated by Highway 290, which divides the Anglos on the east from the Mexican Americans on the west, who share their side of the road with a small enclave of Anglos and a handfull of scattered blacks. Socially, Sonora is even more sharply divided. The two worlds rarely meet on any terms of equality, and in the now integrated schools, there is an uneasy mix that rarely spills beyond the classroom or football field into the social context. Mixed dating leaves Anglos aghast, and the occasional "scandal" of an Anglo girl running off to get married with a Mexican American boy is met with profound sympathy for the girl's poor parents.

Sonora is the county seat of Sutton County, and the Sonora Independent School District takes in the whole of the county. With a total population of about 3,000, with more than two-thirds residing in the town, the community is divided almost equally between Anglo (45 percent) and Mexican American (55 percent). The ethnic breakdown is roughly reflected in the schools. Of a total of 848 children enrolled in 1971-72, 47.9 percent were Anglo, 51.1 percent Mexican American, and 1.0 percent black.

Table II. Ethnic Breakdown in Sonora Schools

	Anglo		Mexican American		Black		Total
Elementary, K-5	173	42.8%	229	56.7%	2	0.5%	404
Junior High, 6-8	93	49.2%	95	50.3%	1	0.5%	189
High School, 9-12	140	54.9%	109	42.7%	6	2.4%	255
Total	406	47.9%	433	51.1%	9	1.0%	848

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In December 1969, a group of Mexican American parents brought suit against the Sonora I.S.D.[1] The class action, filed in the U.S. District Court at San Angelo, alleged that the Sonora school system operated in violation of the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The controversy over segregation in Sonora public schools was by no means new. Until the late 1940's, all Mexican American students, grades 1 through 12, attended a single, segregated school. In 1948, the high school grades were integrated, and all Mexican American children below high school went to L.W. Elliott School, situated on the west side of town. A separate, one-room school was also maintained for the few blacks in the community. Until 1965, Sonora operated three separate elementary schools: the black school; the Elliott School, almost wholly Mexican American; and the Central Elementary School, overwhelmingly Anglo. In 1965, the black school was closed, and a zoning correction was made so as to eliminate the more flagrant gerrymander. Under the new boundaries, a few Mexican American families were included in the district for the Central Elementary School. A few Anglo families fell within the Elliott district, but they moved out of the zone.

At the time of the suit, in 1969, 52 percent of the students in the Sonora schools were Mexican American. There was one high school, and one junior high. The boundary between the two elementary schools, which included kindergarten through the fifth grade, resulted in an enrollment in the Elliott school of some 98 percent Mexican American and 2 percent black. As the plaintiffs noted in their suit, "Not a single Anglo-American child attends this school." Of the Central Elementary School, the ethnic makeup was the reverse: 98 percent Anglo, 2 percent Mexican American. The distribution was sustained by the residential concentration of Mexican Americans west of the highway, but by the rules of the district, no student was permitted to transfer out of his geographical area to the other school. In this predominantly ranching community, Anglos living in the county were permitted to choose which elementary school they wished to attend: Mexican Americans were <u>assigned</u> to the Elliott school.

The pattern of segregation was further maintained, the plaintiffs argued in their case, by the "tracking system" used in the schools to categorize students within each grade by ability. On the basis of tests administered by the elementary schools, the children were grouped in one of several tracks, and such placement, the plaintiffs contended, was "normally decisive" in future classification throughout the child's school attendance. The track system tended "to separate and segregate the pupils entering the

Sonora Junior High School on the basis of national origin." "The Mexican-American student who has not mastered the English language scores poorly on such examinations and is thus placed into a low track. The vast majority of the Mexican-American students in Sonora are in these lower tracks, and are thus placed in separate classrooms upon entering the junior high school."[2]

At the elementary level, the facilities of the Elliott school were markedly inferior to those of Central Elementary. Among various differences cited by the Mexican Americans were the lack of a school cafeteria and access to gym facilities. Most critical, however, was the fact that the Elliott school had no library (in contrast to Central) and the quality and quantity of books in individual classrooms at Elliott were inadequate.

In addition, the plaintiffs stated that while Mexican Americans had "applied for positions in the school system in the past, they have been rejected as unqualified, despite the fact that they held degrees from accredited teachers colleges." Sonora I.S.D. protested that it had tried to hire Mexican American teachers. The fact remained, however, that at the time of the suit, not one of the professional staff of 45 was a Mexican American--nor had a Mexican American ever been so employed in the Sonora public schools. Nor, for that matter, had a Mexican American ever been elected to the school board.

The pattern of de facto segregation in Sonora had led the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to investigate Sonora in February, 1969, and HEW ruled the district in noncompliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with HEW guidelines. HEW proposed two alternative plans:

> (a) All children in grades kindergarten through three attending the L.W. Elliott School, and all children in grades four through six attending the Central Elementary School, or;
>
> (b) All elementary school children grades kindergarten through six being assigned to the Central Elementary and Junior High Schools, and grades seven and eight being assigned to the L.W. Elliott School.[3]

The plaintiffs, in their suit, sought the acceptance of one of these plans so as to "ensure a totally unitary school system for all eligible pupils without regard to national origin, race and/or color." As it was, the Sonora I.S.D. orperated "a racially and ethnically

segregated school system that came into existence as a de jure school system, and is presently continued, perpetuated and maintained by defendants' rules, regulations, policies, directives, customs, practices and usages. The end result of the defendants' policies is to perpetuate the effect of their past dual system."

On the basis of a pre-trial conference, the judge ordered the abolition of the attendance zone lines and the attendance of all elementary school children at the Central Elementary School. "All classes, programs, activities and facilities will be operated on an integrated basis." The district was directed to develop a "comprehensive plan...designed to provide all students in the school system with sufficient English language skills to ensure their effective participation in the district's educational program." Lastly, Sonora was directed to "actively seek to recruit for their professional staff personnel of Mexican descent."[4]

In response to the order, Ken McAllister, superintendent of schools in Sonora since 1969 and formerly of Sanderson in West Texas, proposed a "Language Arts Development Program." The Sonora plan sought to "improve and extend" the Oral Language Program then in existence to teach English and to add other programs to better enable the non-English speaking child to understand English and to participate fully in the life of the school. Its specified goals were (1) "to reduce the drop-out rate of the educationally deprived child," and (2) "to prepare the Mexican-American student for a gainful life and career." Overall, the program was "aimed at the educationally and culturally deprived pupil to improve his ability to have an adequate command of the English language."[5]

An "Educational Plan" for Sonora was prepared on behalf of the plaintiffs by Texas for the Educational Advancement of the Mexican-American (TEAM), headquartered in San Antonio. The plan emphasized a bilingual approach. Rather than prescribe a particular bilingual program, the Plan specified goals and objectives. It recommended that beginning in kindergarten, instruction be conducted bilingually. The child's mother tongue, whether English or Spanish, should be used as the medium of instruction while he gains command of the other language. All classrooms should be "heterogeneously grouped" so that the ratio of Mexican American to Anglo students in each classroom approximates the ratio of all students enrolled at each grade level. Moreover, "no effort should be made to structure class enrollments according to ability or achievement scores or teacher evaluation."[6]

The plan also recommended a bicultural curriculum. In the words of a draft comprehensive plan prepared by the plaintiffs, "Consistent with the adoption of a bilingual method of instruction in the classroom, it is imperative that a bi-cultural curriculum be established outlining what is to be taught."[7] Such a curriculum should reflect a sensitivity to and appreciation of the cultural differences between the Anglo and Mexican American communities.

The success of any such plan is necessarily dependent upon the acquisition and use of bilingual teachers. "At least half of all elementary school teachers hired in the future by the school district must be bi-lingual, and preferably Mexican-American." The Plan also emphasized the importance of effective communication with parents and the community as a whole. With regard to informing parents of the goals, methods, and expected results of the educational program, the Plan underscored the need for those who do not speak English to receive oral communication in Spanish, as written communication in Spanish will not reach those unable to read in any language. So as to secure community support and involvement, the Plan recommended the establishment of an elected bicultural commission of ten citizens--five Anglos and five Mexican Americans--with the stipulation that each representative have a child in school.[8]

Sonora I.S.D., seeking to incorporate elements of the TEAM plan, submitted a Supplemental Plan to the court. Sonora now specified that all classrooms would be "heterogeneously grouped." In procedural detail, following that recommended by the plaintiffs, Sonora accepted a "non-graded approach" to reading in the Language Arts Development Program for grades two through five. "Students from all classroom sections will be assigned to their specific reading grade level and be taught by the reading teacher assigned to that particular level. Thereafter, the student will return to his regular classroom section and regular teacher."[9]

Sonora also committed itself to "continue actively to recruit staff personnel of Mexican-American descent." The Board argued that it had tried to hire Mexican American teachers before the suit, and special effort had been made since. Superintendent McAllister "traveled all over Texas and New Mexico, just begging," the school board president related.[10] Success, however, was not notable. By 1973, Sonora had hired a Mexican American kindergarten teacher, regarded as most critical because as many as a third of the children came with no English at all. A Mexican American physical education teacher

for the elementary grades was also employed, a young man who also served as counselor for the Mexican American children. "These are the only two Mexican-American teachers we could find," McAllister says, "There is a demand for Mexican-American teachers to meet the HEW quota. Also, we just can't get them to come to a small town."11 With no Mexican American teachers in the elementary school classrooms above kindergarten, Mexican American aides have been utilized "to explain" in Spanish what the children do not understand in English. In compliance with the court order, inservice programs on Mexican culture have been required of all teachers in the Sonora schools. "The teachers didn't like it, and it was a chore to get them to go."12

With regard to community linkage, the Supplemental Plan specified that a committee of five Mexican Americans be selected annually: one each from the West Side Lions Club, the Catholic Church, the G.I. Forum, the Primera Baptist Church, with one committee member at large selected by the other four members. This advisory committee of Mexican Americans--corporately selected, apparently so as to secure "responsible" representative--would meet once every three months with the school board to report on matters of school concern and "to make such recommendations as the committee desires to make."

The Board of Trustees and the Sonora school administration further committed themselves "to examine and explore effective approaches to teaching in a bi-cultural environment." No mention was ever made, in the original plan or in the supplement, of bilingual education.

In the view of Armer Earwood, member of the Board for fifteen years and president at the time of the suit, what really mattered to the Mexican American was integration. Bilingual education had never been among the demands of the Mexican Americans of Sonora, nor was it ever mentioned in the original complaint brought before the court. Only in the "Comprehensive Plan" later submitted did the plaintiffs recommend that a bilingual program be put into effect, and, according to Earwood, this point was never pressed by the lawyers for the plaintiffs. Speaking for the school board, he said that they had talked to various people and come to the conclusion that a strong bilingual program, as recommended by the Texas Education Agency, was not in the best interests of all the children. "The way I understand it, most classes would be taught in both English and Spanish, and I think most of the educators we talked to felt that this created too much loss of time.... Classes would be taught, alternating English and Spanish, all the way through ten grades or something like that."

Earwood, a rancher and himself bilingual, felt he spoke for many in the community when he said that he would like his children to learn Spanish in school--starting in the first grade. As for the Mexican American child, Earwood, and the Board with him, favored the use of Spanish in the first few grades of explaining what may not be understood in English. The Board, however, opposed any notion of bilingual education. Its position was that the Mexican American child should have an appreciation of his own culture, but because this is the United States and not Mexico, he needs a full understanding of the English language and American culture if he is to succeed in life. "This," said Earwood, "is the real issue."[13]

In fighting bilingual education, the Board gave Superintendent McAllister a free hand. Indeed, the position of the Board was fundamentally a projection of McAllister's own views. "When we started checking on bilingual education, what they told us was that what they wanted was eventually to teach all subjects in two languages for twelve grades....What it amounts to, the way they explained it to us, is that they spend half the time in a subject in one language and half in another.... I don't think it will work.... I don't think you can learn in two languages." McAllister says he has yet to see proof that bilingual education works. "We are absolutely opposed to the time, effort, and money involved if you have to instruct in two languages in all subjects. They tried to tell us during the law suit that by the time they entered the sixth grade that they (the Mexican-American students) would be proficient in both English and Spanish, and I told them we can't get them proficient in English by the end of the sixth grade."

Speaking for the school, McAllister said that "we don't feel that we should force an English-speaking child to learn Spanish in order to learn his subject matter." Bilingual education would not work in Sonora because it would not be accepted. "If we were compelled to have a bilingual program, you'd have the biggest riot on your hands you'd ever seen."[14]

One of the major problems stressed by the plaintiffs and to which the Sonora school board and administration had been sensitive was the dropout rate among Mexican American students. "We tried various approaches to encourage them to stay in school," Earwood stated, "The number of dropouts has declined, but this is not really the result of the school. It is because we don't have as many migrant workers in the community as we used to.

The real problem in the dropout is that the parents don't really care whether they go to school or not."[15]

On November 5, 1970, the suit came before the Court for hearing. The Judge found that with Sonora's closure of the Elliott school, the defendants had "fully complied with the directives of the Court," and that Sonora was "now operating a unitary, non-discriminatory, fully desegregated school system." The Judge further found that "conscientious efforts are continuing to improve the quality of education in the Sonora District and that special emphasis is being placed on solving the problems confronting Sonora as a bi-lingual community."[16]

The plaintiffs' response again called for bilingual education.[17] They indicated that the Sonora plan, as supplemented, "if fully and imaginatively implemented offers an opportunity for significant improvement in the education of all Sonora school children." It is not sufficient, however, for, they argued, "in order to achieve a system that provides complete equal educational opportunity in a school system, with large numbers of Mexican-American children, some form of a bilingual method of instruction and extensive bi-cultural curriculum are needed." Bilingual education had been central to the plaintiffs' Plan, and they now reminded the Court of its statutory support by Act of Congress:

> In recognition of the special educational needs of the large number of children of limited English-speaking ability in the United States, Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies to develop and carry out new and imaginative elementary and secondary school programs designed to meet these special needs.[18]

The Texas legislature had, moreover, specifically authorized the bilingual method of instruction:

> It is the policy of this state to insure the mastery of English by all pupils in the schools; provided that bilingual instruction may be offered or permitted in those situations where such instruction is educationally advantageous to the pupils.[19]

The plaintiffs based their argument for bilingual education largely on the importance of the self-image of the child in the educational experience. "The Mexican-

American child often comes from a home where Spanish is the primary language.... When he reaches school and is told that his language is forbidden to him, his reaction is one of alienation from the schools. What he brings to school is, in essence, rejected. Reinforcing his belief in his own worth in the same way that the Anglo is taught the value of his culture in the school is one of the primary purposes behind bilingual education."

The plaintiffs' response to the Court Order was also directed to the matter of bicultural curriculum. "A bi-cultural curriculum is absolutely essential to the improvement of education in Sonora for both Mexican-American and Anglo children." With "a history of discrimination" in Sonora, the plaintiff contended, it is not enough to simply recognize the problems of education in a bicultural environment or that bicultural enrichment of the curriculum might be appropriate. "Curriculum changes must be made."

The plaintiffs refused to concede that the Sonora I.S.D. plan placed the system in compliance with the requirements of the Fourteenth Amendment or with the Civil Rights Acts. They concluded that such compliance could not take place until the implementation of a plan which has the effect of providing an equal educational opportunity for all the children in Sonora.

In his final ruling, the Judge decreed that the plan as submitted and supplemented by the defendants "is hereby approved" and that the Sonora Independent School District implement the plan no later than the beginning of the 1971-72 school year.[20]

"We came out of it real good," Superintendent McAllister later stated.[21]

Sonora declined the opportunity to apply for funding under Title VII, and in lieu of bilingual approach, adopted the Albuquerque Oral Language Program,[22] an English as a Second Language approach," using "the home language to help the[m] lear[n] English." In 1971-72, the program was introduced into kindergarten, and the following year it accompanied the children into the first grade. In 1973-74, the Oral Language Program will be extended to the second grade. One program will be extended no further. McAllister states that he feels "that by the end of the second grade, they have enough English to go on." The Albuquerque program is, as McAllister describes it, only one part of the overall Sonora program. There is the Language Arts Development Program with its non-graded reading, and in junior high, a corrective reading program, "with a regular reading lab."[23]

In the first grade, there are three sections. All three teachers are Anglo; two are bilingual. There is also one Mexican American assistant, who divides her time between the three classes. The classes, structured so as to effectively use the aide, are taught with alternative between sessions of the full class and learning groups based on special needs. Additional classroom units were added to Central Elementary School at the time of the Elliott school's closure to accomodate the inflow of new students. Class size was thus maintained at about 25.

The suit jolted the Anglo community in Sonora. Armer Earwood, school board president at the time, said that the first time any member of the board or faculty knew anything about the suit was when they read of it in the San Angelo newspaper. "Before the suit, there was no effort by anyone to talk to the Board." He is convinced, as are many Anglos in Sonora, that the suit did not come out of the community at all, but that it was a test case--as had been the one in San Marcos filed about a year before. "Some of the people who were involved," Earwood stated, "told me repeatedly afterwards that they were talked into this."[24] McAllister attributes initiation of the case to the activities of outside VISTA workers and to the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund.[25]

The Mexican Americans in Sonora were divided about the suit. As Earwood described the situation, there was an "aggressive group" which felt that better economic and career opportunities for their children would come only with a better understanding of English. They wanted integration. Others, however, felt that in an integrated elementary program, their children would be lost, and, as a result, would not get anything.[26] Some were concerned about the difficulty of transporting the children across town to Central Elementary; some worried about the danger in crossing the highway.

The Anglos certainly were not divided. The feelings ran strongly during the course of the court action. There was never an incident in the schools, however, despite some threats of a walkout or demonstration by the Mexican American students. One of the plaintiffs, Gene Gonzáles, was a self-employed welder and, by all hands, a very good one. During the suit, Gonzáles' business was boycotted, and although he regained his clients after the suit, business fell off by 90 percent during the course of the legal battle.[27] Other Mexican American establishments were also boycotted, and Anglo employers put the pressure on the Mexican American employees to oppose the suit.

Anglo parents were up in arms, and a letter-writing campaign directed against bilingual education was organized. Letters were sent to Congressman O.C. Fisher of the 21st District, to state legislators, members of the State Board of Education, and others. The text of one such letter read as follows:

> For our schools to teach in a bilingual manner as set up by the Bilingual Advisory Board and recommended to the State Board of Education is utter folly.
>
> The students of Mexican extraction in Texas schools do not speak Spanish. They speak "border Spanish" or "Tex-Mex" which is almost unintelligible to anyone knowing the Spanish language well. This situation would entail the learning of both Spanish and English for these students.
>
> Another factor is the time element involved in such a program which would obviously make it impossible to accomplish more than a fraction of the work previously covered in the same period.
>
> Furthermore, is it imperative that students sacrifice their mode of education and speed of learning through this program which at the same time would be detrimental to the student of Mexican extraction and impede his progress?
>
> I urge you to exercise every means at your disposal to prevent a bilingual program in our schools.

Much of Sonora's Anglo opposition focused on the spectre of "federal control." The Courts were seen as the agent of a distant and alien government, interfering in the operation of the community's schools. McAllister is particularly vocal in his opposition to "controls." He regards his testimony before a committee of the Texas Legislature as instrumental in defeating Carlos Truan's bill that would have required bilingual educational programs in all schools with 5 percent or more Spanish-speaking children. McAllister protests that he is in no way opposed to a permissive bill--one that would enable a school system to adopt bilingual education if it so chose--but he is unalterably opposed to mandatory programs.

McAllister has bypassed considerable federal assistance to schools in his opposition to the controls that accompany financial aid. He has refused to apply for funding under Title VII and argues that this, as

well as many other federal school programs, is largely waste boondoggle. Of the schools that have been funded and have so-called "bilingual programs," McAllister believes that few have anything approaching what the Texas Education Agency understands to be bilingual education. They are doing what Sonora is doing--using the home language in order to teach the children English. They call it bilingual education to secure funding and to satisfy the Mexican American community and state and federal education officials. This, McAllister says, Sonora refuses to do.[28]

By 1972, with "victory" for the Sonora defendants, tempers began to cool. The bogey of bilingual education had been shelved--for the time being--behind the semblance of an Albuquerque program. School integration brought no incidents, and in the judgement of the school board president, "As a result of the suit. the Mexican-Americans are probably better informed about the school and some of the school problems than they were before."[29]

The Mexican Americans feel too that they won their case. In their eyes, they accomplished a victory at the expense of the Anglos, and this carries enormous social and psychological overtones in a community so long characterized by Anglo dominance. Their main concern had been integration of the schools, and the suit forced the issue. Within the Mexican American community, bilingual education stirred little interest. It did arouse some anxiety, however, for what motivated the suit above all was a concern for economic opportunity--and, as bilingual education had been presented to them, it appeared more to thwart rather than advance that goal. Gene Gonzáles, one of the parties to the suit, feels that Spanish might come later, perhaps in the fifth grade, but only after the child has a firm knowledge of English. His conversations with teachers convinced him that bilingual education simply involves "too much material to cover in a day's work" and "would only lead to the child's flunking out.... There was just not enough time to teach in two languages--and the children were there to learn English." For him, the issue was integration. In testimony before the court, he related his memories of discrimination during his youth in Sonora--of exclusion from restaurants, the movie house, and the swimming pool. The controversy over the pool was "settled" only with its final closure. "All we want," he says, "is to be treated equal. I am just as human as anybody else."[30]

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Chapter V.

CONCLUSIONS

The experiences of these four southwest Texas communities--Laredo, Del Rio, Crystal City, and Sonora--reveal a range of problems which may confront any school administration as it seeks to develop and implement a program of bilingual education. The optional character of Title VII left it to each community to determine for itself whether it would adopt a program of bilingual education. The court ruling in the Del Rio case, however, provides a strong basis for a legally-enforcable interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment so as to include bilingual education as fundamental to the "equal educational opportunity" required by the Supreme Court.

The Bilingual Education Act of 1967 and the subsequent enabling legislation in Texas provided an opportunity for school districts to respond to the educational needs of linguistic minorities. It was a limited program, with limited funding, but it was sufficient to prove that bilingual education can work if properly developed and successfully implemented. The real problem, however, was that bilingual education was subject to a vast number of interpretations, or, perhaps more correctly, misinterpretations. Neither in the school nor in the community did very many people have any clear idea as to what bilingual education was--and when they did, more often than not, it bore little relation to the understanding of the Texas Education Agency as set forth in its design. On the part of the Mexican Americans, bilingual education was most usually seen as either a panacea which would provide for their children all the opportunities of which they themselves were denied, or, alternatively, as a threat to upward mobility by denying the child linguistic access to the dominant culture and condemning him economically to a culture of poverty. Anglos, if they supported bilingual education, have tended most often to interpret it in assimilationist terms, that is, to see bilingual education as simply a "bridge" facilitating access for the Mexican American child to the English-medium of instruction within the school and to the economic and social rewards of the dominant Anglo community. Anglos opposed to bilingual education have interpreted it--

whether in willful misinterpretation or simply in honest misunderstanding--as a program which would, on the one hand, educate the Mexican American in a Spanish medium of instruction so as to deny him the capacity to advance himself in American society, and, on the other, as a program requiring Anglo children to devote so much of their time to the study of Spanish that they would lose out in their substantive education. The basic stance of this position is reflected in the view of the United States as a homogeneous melting-pot, of which English is the only official language. If "they" don't want to speak English, they can just go back where they came from. The question, "Why can't they talk 'merican?", is the fundamental challenge to which educators committed to bilingual education must respond. If bilingual education is to succeed, the community must be educated to what bilingual education is and what it can offer to the children of the community both Mexican American and Anglo.

The initiative in the past for the development of bilingual programs has been primarily in the hands of the superintendent of schools. His interest, his support or opposition to bilingual education, has been the most critical factor. In certain instances, the first moves toward implementing a bilingual program have come from the school board; in others, from community pressure--from organizations of parents, as in Sonora, or from the students themselves, as in Crystal City. Whatever the source, however, the superintendent holds the power to make or break the program. With little commitment to bilingual education, a superintendent may seek funding for a bilingual program simply because the money is there. Federal funds, for all their strings, are enormously attractive, but any bilingual program initiated by such motives, if successful in securing funding, is likely to be little more than sham. "Bilingual programs" may also be introduced as a defensive response to perceived or anticipated community demands. When a program is implemented solely in an attempt to "buy off" the Mexican American community, to foreclose a student strike or a court suit, the school administration is unlikely to bring the commitment necessary for bilingual education to succeed. Indeed, it may even be that in certain cases, bilingual education programs, crippled by lack of adequate support, have been introduced with the express purpose of demonstrating failure--to enable the superintendent to say, "I told you so."

For a bilingual program to succeed, however, it is not enough that it have the enthusiastic support of the

superintendent. He must convince and work with the school board, the teaching staff, and the community as a whole. For a strong and dynamic superintendent, the board is usually the least of his worries--but even he must always be cautious in the expenditure of his political capital. If he senses opposition within the board to bilingual education, he must determine the costs of fighting for the program. Given other pressing demands, bilingual education may be set aside by all but the most committed school administrators.

Once the decision has been reached in favor of bilingual education, however, the superintendent must then confront the teaching staff. No bilingual program can succeed without the support of the teachers who must implement it. Bilingual education has in each school aroused anxiety among the monolingual teachers. Fear over job security has been paramount, but teachers have resisted what obviously means a radical curriculum change, requiring of them not only a different classroom format, but special workshops and perhaps summer training programs for which they may have little enthusiasm. The conservatism of the classroom teacher has meant that he or she has often been virtually dragged into bilingual education. Teacher opposition is frequently revealed in private conversation, and inevitably it is manifest in the classroom situation. When the teacher is not committed to bilingual education, the resultant frustration may be taken out on the Mexican American child. The superintendent faces a delicate problem, for he must alleviate the teachers' anxieties and educate them to the meaning of bilingual education, and, in assigning teachers to bilingual classrooms, must exercise special sensitivity so as to bring to the children those teachers who will most adequately respond to their needs.

In facing the community, the school superintendent must be a consummate politician. He must present a clear and accurate vision of bilingual education, arresting fears and fostering realistic expectations. Above all, he must attempt to keep bilingual education outside the arena of community conflict and to enlist support for the program from all sections of the community, Mexican American and Anglo. Once bilingual education is politicized, it may become a catalyst of polarization between the Anglo and Mexican American communities. Because the fears which can be so easily aroused among parents regarding the education of their children--witness the emotional conflict over school integration and busing--the issue of bilingual education is especially vulnerable to

politicization by those who would seek to advance themselves demagogically or who might choose to use bilingual education as a mask for other issues.

As long as bilingual education remained optional, many school districts simply chose not to confront these problems. Now they no longer have a choice. By Texas statute, bilingual education is now mandatory in all Texas public schools with 20 or more non-English-speaking children in any grade level. Serious problems can be anticipated and must be faced. No doubt some past opponents of bilingual education will go along with sincere effort to fully implement bilingual education programs, but many others will surely drag their feet. School administrators opposing bilingual education may be expected to try to bend the requirements, insofar as they are able, to minimize fundamental changes in their own programs. Teacher resistance is likely to be substantial. There will inevitably be considerable teacher transfers within a district among schools and classrooms in the lower grades as bilingual education is introduced. Teachers are not likely to be overjoyed at such a prospect. In some instances, it may well be that English monolingual teachers will be required to learn Spanish--and this may not be easy, for unless the teacher is enthusiastic, such language training is not likely to be very successful.

The Texas bilingual act passed by a substantial majority, but unless bilingual education can be de-fused as a political issue within the community, major conflict may threaten the future of bilingual education in Texas. It is imperative then that the community itself be educated, that it clearly understand what bilingual education is about, and that a broad base of support within the community as a whole be secured for bilingual education. The final success of bilingual education will be determined outside the schools.

Introduction Notes

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17 Ibid., p. 21.

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22 Senate Bill 121, passed May 23, 1973 and signed into law, June 13, 1973.

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24 Ibid., p. 69.

25 Quoted in the Austin American-Statesman, February 21, 1971.

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Chapter I. Notes

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2 Interview, Wimberly, Texas, March 9, 1972.

3 Interview, Brantley.

4 At the time of bilingual implementation, Joe Finley, Jr. was president of the Board. Finley is owner of the 150,000 acre Callahan ranch, the largest in Webb County. The other Anglo members were John Arndt, chief accountant for the Callahan ranch; John Martin, Jr., a rancher, William McKendrick, Jr., an irrigation farmer; and Otto Kruger, who worked for the Texas Department of Agriculture. The two Mexican American members were Mrs. Amparo Gutierrez and Victor Cruz-Aedo, then superintendent of the Holding Institute in Laredo.

5 "The Implementation of a Program of Bilingual Instruction," unpublished paper, c. 1966.

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7 "The Implementation of a Program of Bilingual Instruction," op.cit.

8 Ibid.

9 San Jose Mercury-News, Feb. 21, 1971.

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19 Ibid., p. 4.

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36 Walter Craig Davidson, "The Mexican American High School Graduate of Laredo," unpublished paper, funded through a ESEA Title III grant by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Laredo, 1970, pp. xvi, xxi.

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39 "Ability to Communicate Ideas Deserves Priority," by Margaret Palermo, staff writer, Laredo Times, November 22, 1971.

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2 From "Bilingual Teaching in Del Rio," n.d.

3 Edward J. Cervenka, "Evaluation of the Garfield Experimental Program in Bilingual Education," Child Development Evaluation and Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, September 1, 1967.

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30 Green v. New Kent County Board of Education, 391 U.S. 430 (1968).

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32 Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, 402 U.S. 1 (1971) and Davis v. Board of Commissioners of Mobile County, 402 U.S. 33 (1971).

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Chapter III. Notes

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4 Shockley, op.cit., pp. 3-8.

5 Ibid., p. 11.

6 Ibid., pp. 12-13.

7 John Schockley, "Crystal City: La Raza and the Second Revolt," unpub. paper, c. 1972. p. 2.

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9 Ibid.

10 José Ángel Gutiérrez in the Texas Observer, January 2, 1970. The anti-La Raza coalition in Crystal City challenges these dropout statistics as "false and an insult to the Mexican-American of this area." Interview, Jack Kingsberry, Crystal City, July 26, 1972.

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19 Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, April 3, 1970.

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26 Austin American, August 26, 1971.

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36 Interview, R.C. Tate, July 26, 1972.

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38 Interview, Crystal City, November 11, 1971.

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40 Interview, Jack Kingsberry, Crystal City, July 26, 1972.

41 Austin American, August 26, 1971.

42 Interview, Mrs. Ted Muñoz, Crystal City, July 26, 1972.

43 Interview, Superintendent Ángel Gonzáles, Crystal City, July 26, 1972.

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2 Ibid.

3 Quoted in Ibid.

4 Marcos Pérez et.al. v. The Sonora Independent School District et.al., Civil Action No. 6-224. Pre-trial Order, June 16, 1970.

5 Proposal for "A Language Arts Development Program," Sonora, submitted in Compliance with the Pre-Trial Order of June 16, 1970. Filed July 31, 1970.

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10 Interview, Armer Earwood, former president of the Board of Trustees, Sonora I.S.D., Sonora, February 18, 1972.

11 Interview, Ken McAllister, Sonora, February 17, 1972.

12 Interview, Earwood, op.cit.

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14 Interview, McAllister.

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18 20 U.S.C. 880 6 et seq.

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21 Interview, McAllister.

22 For a description of the Albuquerque program of the Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory (SWCEL), see. Robert T. Reeback and Helgi Osterreich, Progress Report of the Oral Language Program, Albuquerque: Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory, 1971.

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24 Interview, Earwood, op.cit.

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26 Interview, Earwood.

27 Interview, Gene Gonzáles, Sonora, August 6, 1972.

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